



素晴らしい世界に
祝福を!
スピノカフ

爆焰を!

素晴らしい世界に

も
ら
み
ん
の
や
ー
ハ

暁 なつめ

illustration
三嶋くらね

角川スニーカー文庫



飽きた！

ホースト

.....
お願いしますよこめっこさん！

こめっこ





もしもゆんゆんがめくみん家にお泊りできていたら!?

しょうがないでしょ、狭いんだから……。

煮…猫……。じゅんじゅん。

ゆんゆん、そんなに押さないでくださいー!

Exclusive Report on the village of the Crimson Magic Race!!

“HOME OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC”

ETERNAL GUIDE

Author & Photography / Arue

Scenic Attraction Catalogue

Within the Home of the Crimson Magic that is feared even by the Demon King, there are many beautiful sights. Many powerful monsters paved the road to the village, so be careful.

▶ WISHING FOUNTAIN



After throwing in an axe, you can summon the goddess of gold and silver. If you throw coins in, your wish will come true. A sacred fountain

▶ SWORD IN THE STONE



Rumoured to grant the one who pulls it out immense power, a legendary sword that is stuck in a boulder.

▶ PUBLIC BATH 『MIXED HOTSPRING』



The bath owner fills the tubs with ‘Create Water’ and heats it up with ‘Fireball’.

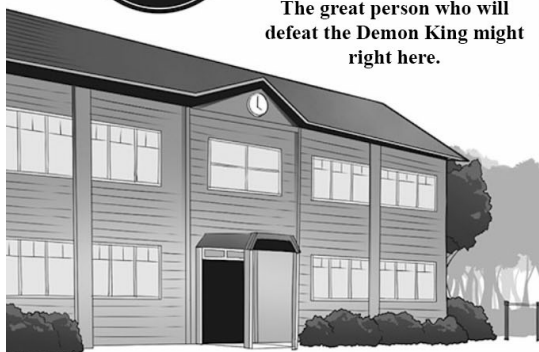
▶ CAFE 『DEADLY POISON』



The shop sounds dangerous but the food is delicious. Aside from this, there are many other shops with repeat customers such as the weapon shop ‘Goblin Killer’.



The home of the Crimson Magic also has a high level education institute that nurtures Archwizards. I will introduce the future Archwizards studying here. The great person who will defeat the Demon King might right here.



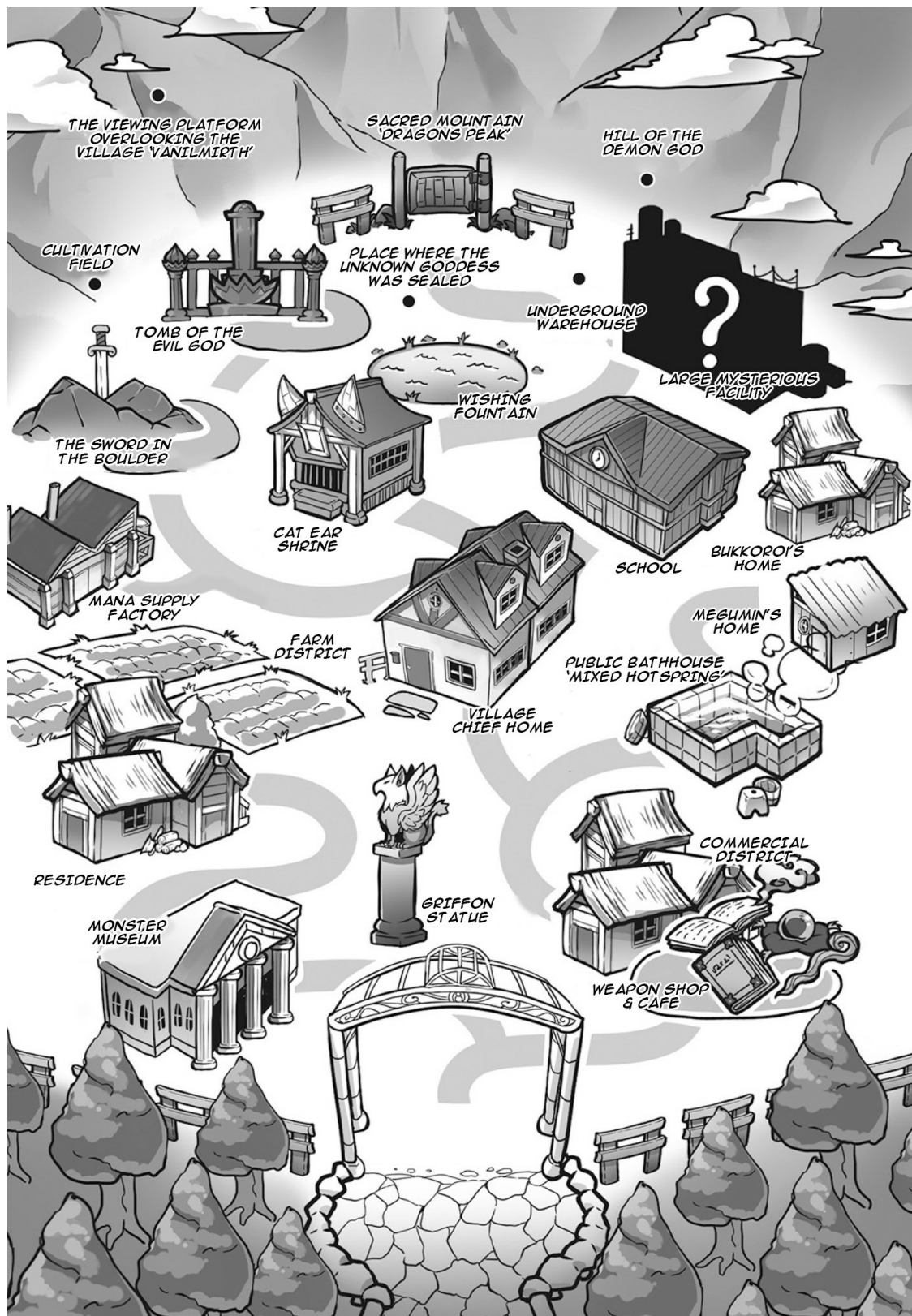
Home of the Crimson Magic Academy seating arrangement



‘THE NUMBER ONE GENIUS OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC’ EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

That’s right. I am the ‘Number one genius of the Crimson Magic’. My goal is to be the ‘strongest’, I don’t give a damn about learning something as common as advance magic.





この素晴らしい世界に爆焔を!

CONTENTS

プロローグ P005

第一章 紅い瞳の魔法使い達 P015

第三章 紅魔族の孤高の少女 P073

第三章 ガーデイアーズ 紅魔の里を守る者 P137

第四章 紅魔の里に眠る存在 P189

第五章 プレリュード 爆裂狂の誕生 P251

エピローグ P307

Prologue



“Explosion!”

A person who wore her hood really low chanted the spell peacefully.

In contrast to her calm tone, the power of the spell was devastating.

The explosive sound shook the air, and came with a scorching blast.

The black giant beast which was chasing me was blown away without any resistance.

And that's not all. My sacred playground was also completely destroyed by the powerful spell, blowing away the toys that I worked so hard to gather.

Overwhelming power that can sweep away anything.

The greatest destructive force that was greater than any other kind of spell.

This massive destruction was dealt by only a single mage. A single shot.

What kind of spell could that be?

Even the adults in the village never used something like that before.

The hooded person walked near to the mindblown and dazed me.

“Are you ok? Were you hurt anywhere?”

She bent down and peeked at my expression.

The robe she was wearing was really rustic, but when she bent down her plump breasts were displayed prominently.

Oh wow this is awesome. Well that spell was awesome too but this is way better!

“How am I able to become someone like you?”

This question just immediately popped out from my mouth. I even forgot to thank her first.

The words that my mom kept repeating recently floated in my mind.

“Our family has had thin bodies in basically every generation. You’d better give up earlier.” — something like this.

I am not gonna give up.

Not gonna give up until the very end.

With such a mood like this, I clenched my fist, staring at her plump parts.....

The hooded person looking at me and seems to have smiled.



.....

With a short silence. That big sister asked cringingly,

“.....Is that a nickname?”

“It’s my real name.”

The big sister silent again and tried to calm herself, and then she said,

“You want to become someone like me...? Hmm.....If you eat more, learn more, and

become an arch wizard; I am pretty sure..... ”

Become an arch wizard, then I can have huge breasts.

Become an arch wizard, then I can have huge breasts!

“Yes. If you become an arch wizard, one day you will be able to use that spell. But honestly I don’t really recommend that spell though.”

Seems like the person with the hood said something else, but I’ve already fallen into the dream of being an arch wizard.

“But...”

The person with the hood patted my head while I kept mumbling “arch wizard, arch wizard”, and looked around.

“Hey little girl, did you see any other adults around here? There should be someone who removed the seal of the tomb.....because the fragments of the seal are here, and it should not be automatically unsealed.....”

The person with the hood twisted her head and picked up the fragment beside my feet.

“That man should still around here. Its a mystery as to who unleashed me.....Well never mind, asking you is not gonna help me figure it out. ”

While she was talking, she came to the center of the giant hole that was created by the spell.

A black beast was lying over there and barely breathing.

She put her hand upon the black beast’s head.

“Please sleep a little bit longer, my other half. This world is still too peaceful for you to wake up.....”

The person with the hood mumbled like this, and her hand that seems like she was absorbing something from that beast and kept

flashing.

Meanwhile the beast became smaller and smaller.

Finally it shrank to the size of a cat, and its shape became a blur, and disappeared.

“Okay, after this.....Oh? What are you doing right now little girl?”

I was picking up the toys that was scattered on the ground. Then she turned to me.

“I am picking up my toys. My family is very poor, these are all I have.”

“Ah? No, no. These are not toys. They are used for sealing the horrible, evil fiend. They’re very important....Hmm???? ”

I assembled those fragments that I picked up, but some of the fragments are missing.

Need three more pieces.

“Big sister your spell blew three pieces away, can we look for them together?”

“No, NoNoNo ! This is way too weird! How did you assemble those pieces that simply! This is absolutely odd! Even those adults, like oracles, were having a hard time on cracking them, how did this happen..... ”

The person with the hood kept stroking her jaw, seems to be really confused.

“When did you come and play on this sealed land little girl? Didn’t the adults inside the village told you not to go near here?”

“My mom said, if people told you ‘Its dangerous there’ ‘There’s nothing there’ or ‘Don’t get close to it’ about someplace, that always means there are treasures hidden over there.”

“Wha-Whaaaat.....!!!”

The person with the hood was frightened and panicked.

After that she stood beside me and put her hand on my head.

“Well, although there are still, many things that I don’t know what happened, but most likely I have to thank you. Do you have any wishes little girl? I might not look like it but I am actually a mysterious mage with great power. No matter what kind of wishes, I can make one of them come true.”

“Wish?”

“Yes, Wish. Don’t feel hesitated, just bring it. No matter what kind of..... ”

“Conquer the world.”

“.....Sor, sorry, I can’t do that . What happened to her? This kid might able to become a great person.....Errr, don’t you have any other wish?”

The edge of her hood was very low, but I still peeked that the corner of her mouth is twitching.

“Then turn me into a girl with huge boobs.”

“N,No, This is impossible either. How old are you right now? You should not be in the age to

worry about that yet.”

Looks like this is not gonna work either.

Then.....

“Make me into the demon king.”

“Sor,sorry! I have to correct my words. Unlike such a talented little girl as you, I am just a simple mage with some power. Only able to achieve a simple wish.”

The person with the hood aplogized to me and a drop of sweat came across her face.

I looked at the fragment pieces on my hand.

“.....My toy is still missing three pieces. Could you find them for me?”

“Wait! No, I can still achieve a wish that’s a little larger....! And don’t treat it as a toy! That black guy right now was just sealed again! Don’t come to this place again, got it!? Don’t you have any other wish? Something a little bigger..... ”

The person with the hood seem embarrassed and looked at me cravenly.

.....Something a little bigger.

Well then——

“Please teach me that spell.”

Chapter 1

CRIMSON-EYED WIZARDS



PART 1

—This morning's scene was the same as usual.

The homeroom teacher held the name list in one hand, while taking attendance.

“I’m doing the roll call... Arue! Kaikai! Sakiberi!”

The students, who were called by the teacher, responded accordingly.

They were all girls.

This school separated boys and girls into different classes.

There were only eleven students in the classroom, so the teacher got to me quickly.

“Megumin!”

“Present.”

After getting my response, the homeroom teacher nodded in satisfaction.

“Okay, everyone is present. Then...”

“Te- Teacher!”

The student next to me raised her hand, just as the teacher was about to close the name list. She was on the verge of tears.



“My name has not been called yet...”

“Eh? Oh, sorry! There is only one student on the next page. Sorry, sorry! Then... Yunyun!”

“Present!”

Yunyun, who had her hair tied with ribbons, replied as her name was called. She ought to be angry for being left out, yet she merely blushed.

—This was a small school located within the Home of the Crimson Magic.

When they came of age, all kids in the village would learn general knowledge in this school. At the age of 12, they would gain the advanced job known as “arch wizard”, and began learning magic.

The Crimson Magic Clan was naturally blessed with high intelligence and vast amount of mana. In most cases, they will remain in school until they mastered magic.

Here, mastering magic amounted to graduation.

In other words, everyone in this classroom still did not know magic.

The students here accumulated skill points daily in order to master the type of magic they desired.

Different magic required different amount of skill points.

The more powerful the magic, the more skill points it required.

Besides this, the type of magic the students here wanted to learn is definitely—

Advanced magic.

This was what all wizards aspired to, the ability to use all kinds of powerful spells.

In the Home of the Crimson Magic, mastering advanced magic was the only way to be officially recognized as a wizard...

“Now, announcing the test results. As usual, the top three will receive the Skill Up Potion. Starting with the third! Arue!”

With my peripheral vision, I looked at the student who lazily came forward to get the potion, then I looked out of the window in a daze.

“Second place, Yunyun! You live up to your name as the chief’s daughter, well done! Continue to be diligent.”

“Ah, ye- yes!”

I looked at the side, as Yunyun stood up, blushing.

Besides killing monsters to gain experience points and level up, skill points can only be gained by drinking the rare Skill Up Potion.

Therefore, everyone was fighting to get the potion in order to learn advanced magic as soon as possible.

“Finally, in the first place, Megumin!”

Having my name called, I rose to get the potion.

Yunyun, who was next to me, appeared vexed by this.

“Your results are very consistent! I always thought that you should have enough skill points to learn advanced magic... But never mind, continue to work hard!”

After taking the potion and returning to my seat, I looked out the window again.

From the second floor window, one could see beyond the village.

Was the unnamed person, whom I met as a child, currently travelling in high spirits?

As the homeroom teacher was still encouraging other students, I quietly took out a card from my chest pocket.

This card was called Adventurer’s Card. In the job field, it was written Arch Wizard.

Level 1. There were 45 skill points displayed below.

In the available skill list, the words “Learning ‘advanced magic’ requires 30 skill points” were glowing.

“The other students should learn from Megumin, and work hard to master advanced magic! Now then, let’s start the lesson!”

Ignoring the homeroom teacher, my finger touched a certain row of gray words in my card's skill list...

"Learning 'Explosion magic' requires 50 skill points."

In the Crimson Magic Clan, a person must learn advanced magic to be officially recognized as a wizard, but that was not the magic I wanted to learn.

The destructive spell casted by that robed person was still fresh in my mind.

I would definitely learn Explosion magic.

And, someday I would let that person see my magic—

PART 2

During the break after the first period ended, a hand slammed on my desk with a loud "Pat!".

"Megumin! You understand, right?"

The person talking to me was Yunyun, who sat next to me.

She was the daughter of the Crimson Magic Clan chief. An all-rounder who was also the class monitor.

"Fine. By the way, what is my breakfast for today? I'm famished."

"Is, is that so? Today's meal is prepared by me whole-heartedly... No, wrong! Why is my defeat a foregone conclusion? To- today I definitely will not lose! This time, I will show you the victory of the chief's daughter!"

She proclaimed herself to be my rival, yet she treated me to free meals every day.

As Yunyun made her declaration, she placed her meal box on my desk.

I placed the potion I received earlier on the desk as well.

“I will decide the content of this match. The chief’s daughter can surely make a bit of concession. A bet involving a rare potion and a packed meal is unfair anyway.”

“I understand. Megumin, you can decide the match’s content this time.”

She’s so easy to scam.

“Then, the match’s content will be, during the next physical examination, whoever is slimmer and more environmentally friendly...”

“That’s cheating! There is no way I can win Megumin in this!”

What...!

“Although I decided the content, I’m still angry when you say that so confidently! We are at the same age, so there can’t be too big of a difference! Just how narcissistic are you, little girl!”

“Ouch, ouch! Stop. The match’s content should be competing how much we have grown, right? If you are so energetic, why not have a match during physical education class?”

I was still knocking Yunyun to the sound of “Pat! Pat! Pat!”, as the other students left for the infirmary.

According to my long years of research, the saying that I heard as a child – “Becoming an arch wizard will enlarge one’s breasts” – may have some basis.

Probably, mana circulation allowed blood to flow more smoothly, accelerating growth. Most of the powerful wizards in the village got big breasts.

Therefore, as the top student in class, I would have big breasts soon.

Still indulging in fantasy, I walked towards the infirmary. Yunyun hurriedly followed behind.

“Hey, Megumin! If you are so confident, let’s settle this with normal

games instead? Ah, don't walk so fast...!"

When we entered the infirmary, the examination had already begun.

Mine was an all-girls class. I was the shortest one.

I thought this was a nutrition issue.

Thanks to my father who was a magic item artisan with special artistic sensibility, my family was in poverty all the time.

The inconsistent meals I was getting probably affected my growth.

"Ah, Arue has grown. You're already the first in class. Good, next is... Megumin... Hm. I already told you, even if you stick your chest out, it is pointless. I use examination magic, so it won't change the results even if you take a deep breath and hold it."

My little bit of effort was wasted. The infirmary's teacher used magic to determine my true physical statistics.

"Hm... Megumin has grown slightly taller. Next is Yunyun."

"Oh no, because I have become bigger, so I will definitely lose... Ah, I really lost to Megumin again... Ouch, ouch! Why? I lost the match, and my packed meal has been taken. Why is Megumin still hitting me?"

"Ask your god damn breasts!"

"Megumin, stress is not conducive to growth!"

PART 3

I ate the breakfast that I plundered from Yunyun.

"Megumin! There is some high grade pudding made from natural Neroid. It is most suitable for dessert!"

"Thanks. Ah, there is no spoon."

"Ah, so-, sorry. Please wait."

I silently ate Yunyun's meal at my desk, looking at her as she hurriedly took out the spoon. At this time, Yunyun finally recovered her wit, and slammed the pudding and spoon on the desk.

"Wrong! I'm trying to use the pudding as a wager! Why must I take care of Megumin so diligently?"

"I feel like I'm a kitten or puppy fed by Yunyun every day. So, isn't it about time you bring me home? Buy some snacks along the way."

"Eh! Can I really...? No, it's not like that! We are rivals! Besides, your so-called 'buy some snacks' is nothing more than snatching away my food!"

When did I become her rival?

Whatever, I returned the meal box to Yunyun after finishing the content.

"Thanks for your hospitality. The flavor is not bad today. Very delicious. Tomorrow, I'd like to have more protein."

"Ah, is, is that so? Then tomorrow I..."

Yunyun took her meal box, happily kept it in her school bag, and recovered her wits.

"I, I already said, this is very strange! Why must I..."

"Get back to your seats. Lesson is starting. Hey, don't bring pudding to school. Confiscated!"

"Ah!" X2

Inadvertently entering the classroom, the homeroom teacher confiscated the pudding.

The teacher ignored Yunyun, who was softly moaning "My pudding..." next to me, and started the lesson.

The homeroom teacher wrote lines of magic system on the blackboard, urging students to take notes.

We silently took notes. The teacher blatantly ate the pudding while

explaining.

“Today I will explain special magic. Firstly, there are three types of magic written here. Elementary, intermediate, and advanced magic. There is no need to explain these further. You should already know that advanced magic is the highest level of magic.”

The homeroom teacher wrote three other types of magic on the blackboard.

“In this world, besides advanced magic, there are also special systems of magic, known as Blast magic, Detonation magic, and Explosion magic. Although these magic systems are very powerful, they are hard to control and consume a lot of mana. Therefore, few people actually use them.”

I focused on the pudding being eaten by the teacher, but suddenly reacted to the term ‘Explosion magic’.

“Firstly, Blast magic. This magic can smash even bedrocks. The wizards who learn this will be recruited by the government when they needed for civil development. But learning Blast magic requires as much skill points as learning advanced magic. Therefore, unless you want to be a civil servant working in civil engineering, it is best not to learn it.”

Blast magic. Blast magic... I wrote it neatly in my note book, seriously listen to the teacher’s explanation without missing a word.

“Next is Detonation magic. This is the magic wielded by the legendary Arch Wizard. In the face of her barrage of Detonation magic, the opposing monsters were buried without resistance. But this magic consumes a lot of mana. An ordinary wizard can only cast it a few times. Even if you are confident in your mana reserves, learning this magic is still not practical.”

Detonation magic—Detonation magic—

I wrote down “Detonation, Detonation”.

At this point, the teacher put down the chalk, and returned to eating the pudding.

Seriously, he did not explain the most important Explosion magic!

“Teacher. About the Explosion magic...”

I stood up and raised my hand. All my classmates turned to focus on me. The homeroom teacher laughed.

“Forget about Explosion magic. It requires a ridiculously high amount of skill points to learn. Even a wizard with large mana reserves cannot cast it successfully because of the immense amount of mana required. Even if he is lucky enough to cast it, the immense power will not only defeat monsters, but also change the physical terrain. If it is cast inside a dungeon, the entire dungeon will collapse. The explosive noise will also attract monsters nearby. Yes, Explosion magic is simply useless.”

PART 4

—The third period was language lesson.

“Everyone, for Crimson Magic Clan, grammar and vocabulary are very important. Do you know why? ...Megumin! Please explain why they are important to Crimson Magic Clan.”

Upon being called, I stood up.

“Because the speed of casting and accuracy of pronunciation will affect the control of magic.”

“Three points, far from being good enough.”

“T-Three points!?”

I only received Three points... Three points...

I sat down dejectedly. Yunyun, who was next to me, was called.

“Next, Yunyun! Tell me the correct answer.”

“Yes! The sealed, ancient magic are written in the language of past eras. It is necessary to learn them in order to decipher forbidden curses and spells.”

“Thirty points! Good job on mentioning forbidden curses and sealed magic, but the other parts are wrong!”

“Thirty points!? ... Thirty points...”

Yunyun sat down dejectedly. The teacher seemed disappointed and, sighed deeply.

“Sigh... Are you two really the top in class...”

“Ah!” X2

The teacher’s attitude caused us to exclaim, but this annoying teacher ignored us, and called another student.

“Arue! For the Crimson Magic Clan, why are grammar and vocabulary important!”

The third in class, Arue, stood up, raising her head and sticking out her chest.

“To prevent the appearance of strange aliases like ‘Flame User of Exploding Flame’. Also, to present an interesting monologue before a battle and hype up the mood.”

“One hundred points! Yes, our aliases are very important. I personally possess the best alias in the village. When you graduate, you need to decide on your alias as well. In the next physical education lesson, I will give you all a demonstration!”

PART 5

Calling it a schoolyard was an exaggeration. It was essentially an open space created by using fire magic to burn away the vegetation in front of the school.

The teacher, who was wearing a cloak, had been burning things for some time now.

The rising smoke seemed to be thicker now than when I arrived at school. The teacher must have come to school really early just to do this.

As the smoke rose, the sky darkened.

The teacher probably burnt expensive rain-making talismans, summoning the clouds in advance.

When the teacher was satisfied with the size of the clouds drifting in the sky, she nodded slightly.

“Good. Next will be combat training! For Crimson Magic Clan, what is the most important thing during combat? Hm... Yunyun, you answer!”

“M- me? I, I think, the most important thing during combat... is, is calmness! The calmness to be unshaken by any event is the most important!”

“Five points! Next is Megumin!”

“Five points!?”

Yunyun, after being given Five points by the teacher, became depressed, ceaselessly muttering “Five points...”.

What was the most important thing in combat? That was obvious!

“Destructive power! The power to lay waste to everything! Only power is the most important!”

“Fifty points! Power is indeed necessary. If there is not enough destructive power, the Crimson Magic Clan won’t be able to fight. But it is not entirely correct, so only 50 points!”

“I got merely 50 points...!?”

“I only got five points...”

The teacher looked at our dejected expressions, and spat on the ground, as if saying, “The top students are so disappointing.”

“Pui!”

“Ah!” X2

The hateful teacher ignored our cries, and called another student.

“Arue! Surely, you will know! To someone like you, who cover your left eye with an eye patch, what is the most important thing in combat!”

If the classmate was to remove the eye patch covering her eye, she would be regarded as “really beautiful”. Arue, who didn’t look like she belonged to the same grade, took a step forward and used her index finger to lift up her eye patch.

“It’s being cool.”

“One hundred points! Not bad, Arue. I’ll give you a Skill Up Potion! We, Crimson Magic Clan, must fight elegantly! Now, I will demonstrate...”

“Call of Sandstorm!”

I didn’t know what spell the teacher had been casting. Among the drizzling dark clouds that had been there since earlier, bluish-white lightning flashed.

A powerful magic was being invoked, as unnatural winds howled.

My classmates pressed down their hair in the strong winds. The teacher took out the staff she had prepared, and raised it high in the air.

“Mine is the name of Pucchin, the arch wizard who wields advanced magic...”

After the teacher declared her name, lightning struck the tip of the staff.

Then, the teacher flipped her cloak, which fluttered wildly in the wind.

“The strongest homeroom teacher of Crimson Magic Clan, the one who will eventually become the principal...!”

Following the teacher’s declaration, an even bigger stroke of lightning flashed.

With the lightning glow behind her, the teacher maintained her pose, holding her staff and flipping her cloak.

“Too cool!” X3

As my classmates cheered loudly, I looked around. Only Yunyun held her hands to her cheeks, trembling slightly.

Because the teacher was too cool, Yunyun didn’t dare to look at her directly. I heard her whispers softly.

“How, how embarrassing...!”

It seemed the rumor was true that this girl was weird.

I heard that after entering puberty, some children started admiring strange people. This phenomenon is called Chuunibyou^[W]. She probably had it too.

In the howling winds, the teacher finally made a move, clapping her hands while saying,

“Good! Pair up with a classmate you are close to! Then, make a cool self-introduction to each other, be conscientious about experimenting with poses!”

Hearing the teacher’s words, Yunyun’s body trembled.

I wanted to know what was wrong with her, so I stared at her. She looked around uncertainly, then stole a glance at me.

Surely, she wanted to pair up with me, but it was difficult for her to ask because she declared herself as my rival... How troublesome.

I decided to forcefully pair with her and make her cry with my coolness. But at this time, someone interrupted.

“Megumin, do you have a partner? If not, do you want to pair with me?”

Turning around, I was confronted with a pair of big boobs, which did not seem like those of a 12-year-old. It was as if they are being displayed intentionally... This makes me even more annoyed.

At that moment, “Ah” —a soft voice was heard behind me.

There is no need to turn around to look. It was surely Yunyun.

The eye patch-wearing classmate who spoke to me, Arue, seemed to be doing warm-up exercises, rotating her head and jumping.

Her boobs bounced along with her jumps...

... This one was an enemy!

“Fine. Based on my statistical calculations, your chance of becoming a powerful arch wizard is very high. Therefore, here and now, let’s decide who is better!”

“Can statistics even analyze such things!?”

Yunyun retorted accordingly, but I had no time for that.

“Does everyone have a partner? There should be one extra student, who will pair with me, the teacher.”

“Eh? Ah!”

Yunyun looked around nervously, finding herself alone. She walked towards the teacher, dejectedly.

.....

“Arue. I’m not feeling well today. I want to rest during physical education lesson. Maybe it’s because the food I got from Yunyun earlier has something weird in it.”

“Ah!?”

Hearing me, Yunyun showed an expression of gratitude and surprise.

“Teacher, I’m not feeling well. Can I rest a bit during lesson?”

“What? No. You have never attended a single physical education lesson properly. Today’s lesson is especially important. Don’t pretend to be sick.”

Facing the relentless teacher, I moaned and collapsed on the ground.

“No. Don’t try this trick on me...”

“I-I can’t suppress it anymore...! If this persists, the one within me

will take possession of this body...!”

“What, Megumin, you...! So the thing sealed within your body is awakening...!? It can’t be helped, I permit you to go to the infirmary. Let the teacher in the infirmary reinforce the seal.”

“I understand. Then I will leave now.”

“—Okay, is everyone now in pairs? Start now!”

I listened to the teacher’s instructions, as I walked towards the infirmary.

If the physical education lesson expended the calories I made so much effort to gain from Yunyun’s packed meal, it would be a waste.

After I received the nutrition medicine with sealing power (which was also sold in the market) from the infirmary teacher, I lay down on the bed.

In the quiet infirmary, I pulled the blanket up to my shoulders, thinking about what the teacher said previously.

—Explosion magic was a useless magic.

I wrapped my head in the blanket in resentment.

“Te- Teacher! It’s raining! ...or rather, it’s raining sand! We have already witnessed teacher’s cool poses, so can you stop the rain?”

“The tulips carefully planted by the principal in the flowerbed have been blown away!”

“Ca- can’t stop it! This is terrible. The moon, as the source of magic, rises to its highest point today. My suppressed power has been released...! Let me stop this rain! Do not worry about me, take shelter in the school building!”

“Teacher! Be honest, you only thought about the performance earlier. You didn’t think about how to stop this at all!”

As I listened to the voices from the schoolyard, I slowly closed my eyes—

PART 6

“Hey, Megumin, why are you pacing about in front of my desk, showing off your Skill Up Potion? Is there something you want to say?”

“Nothing... Oh yes, Yunyun’s packed lunch looks delicious today.”

“Is, is that so? Besides the box you have stolen, I made an extra portion... Ah, I won’t give it to you! This portion is not for wager. If this packed lunch gets stolen too, I won’t have anything to eat, so I won’t challenge you!”

“.....”

“Stop. Don’t dangle the potion before me. Quickly drink it already!”

“.....”

“Do-, don’t! I won’t give it to you! Ev- even if you show such a sad face... I will... only give you half...”

After eating the lunch I got from Yunyun, an announcement was made in the school.

“Based on Teacher Pucchin’s analysis, a mysterious rain suddenly happened this morning. Doubtlessly, it is due to the evil god of rain and sloth who was sealed somewhere in the Home of the Crimson Magic. After checking, the principal confirms that this downpour has traces of magical influences, meaning it is artificial. All the teachers are controlling the rainfall, therefore all afternoon lessons are cancelled. The weather outside currently has strong winds, lightning, and heavy rain, making it dangerous for students to go home. Therefore, please do some self-study in school.”

It appeared that the teacher shoved all the responsibility on the evil god.

As I was plotting on how to use this situation to scam some dinner, some students stood up.

They are probably going to the school library to pass time.

—There is something I want to research too.

I wildly shove the food I forcefully took from Yunyun into my mouth...

“I already said half! Only giving you half!”

After tossing the lunch box at Yunyun, I ran to the library.

This was the the Home of the Crimson Magic school which produced many arch wizards, so the library should be well-stocked.

From unspeakable legends to dubious practical manuals.

Yunyun, who came along on her own, was looking for something in the shelves for practical manuals.

“Abstinence Magical Manual for Making Friends”, “Guide: Even Snails Can Be Good at Communications”

Yunyun took a few books with titles I couldn’t understand, but looking at her eyes that seemed to glow with excitement, I decided to keep her muttered words to myself.

I continued searching for my target book, sliding my finger across the books on the shelf.

“Secret Origins of Crimson Magic Clan”, “Until the Fall of the Magic Kingdom”, “Dukes of Hell Series, Volume 4, Prophetic Demon”, “The Truth About Residents from the Other World”

Interesting books flashed by one after another. Finally, I found what I was looking for.

“Practicability of Explosion Magic”I took this book, and flipped through it.

“Explosion magic is the ultimate destructive magic. It is the most powerful offensive magic that can inflict injury to everything in existence. Currently, the way to learn this magic is mostly lost, only known by humans who have spent many years in magical research and long-lived non-human wizards. And, not only is it difficult to learn, its opportunity for use is also very limited. Thereafter, wizards who use this magic are also known as Minefield Wizards, frequently

rejected by adventurers who are looking for party members.”

Reading this, my admiration for Explosion magic was slightly shaken.

In the scene I witnessed as a child, it was a destructive magic that violated everything.

I had always admired that hooded person and her magic—

“Firstly, a person with ordinary talents cannot use it. Even if it has been learnt, it cannot be used due to the vast amount of mana consumed. It is a mystery why such magic was developed. In the present situation, only non-human wizards, who have immensely long lives, will whimsically use excess skill points to learn this magic.....”

.....Reading this, I put the book back in the shelf.

I got the feeling that if I kept reading, I would be even more devastated.

At this time, I noticed an interesting title next to where I put the book.

“Rhodes the Untamed”.

Attracted by the strange title, I reached out to take the book.

—The story was about a senile old king who was accompanied by two retainers as he roamed about his territory in order to change the world.

Due to an unexpected incident, the villagers learnt of the old man’s identity, and accused the governor of various crimes. The governor insisted on his innocence, claiming the villagers were lying.

The old man declared both parties to be guilty and hand out sentences to the villagers and the corrupt governor. As a result, both the villagers and the governor banded together and defeated the old man.

The old man raged, declaring that he will raze this land, while his two retainers consoled him, “It is time for a meal”, and brought him home.

After fighting together on the same side, the villagers and the governor learnt the benefits of unity. Not long after, they built a great city there, unsurpassed by any other cities—

.....Where is the second volume?

I searched for the sequel of this book.

“Hey, what is this book? Super funny! What, don’t you have friends?”

In the quiet mood of the library, there was a sudden burst of noise that was incompatible with the serene mood.

I looked over, and saw that it was Yunyun and another classmate.

This is... This situation is...!

“Friend... That...”

“You don’t have any, right? Otherwise, why would you... ‘You Can Even Befriend Fishes’...? Hey, hey. Forget about this book. At least choose one about mammals...”

“Stop right there!”

I jumped between Yunyun and that classmate, pointing at the latter sternly.

“Your goal is first to bully and toy with this pitiful girl, then take advantage of her broken heart and pretend to be her friend in order to make all kinds of unreasonable demands, right?! Even if you can hide this from others, you cannot hide it from me!”

“Ha!?”

After being exposed by me, the classmate appeared to panic.

“Hey, wait, I don’t understand what you are talking about! I’m only making conversation because I saw Yunyun holding an interesting book...”

“Me-, Megumin, what’s up? Are you influenced by some strange book you have read? Hm. It’s just someone conversing with me...”

The classmate and Yunyun separately explained to me, but—

“No, I merely detected a disharmonious mood, so I intervened as I have nothing better to do. And because I skipped the earlier lesson, I’m the only one who did not practice self-introduction, so I’m somewhat dissatisfied.”

“Way too unreasonable!” X2

Probably because someone heard the shouts of Yunyun and the classmate, the library doors opened.

“Hey, you people are too noisy. Be quiet in the library. I will think of a way to stop the evil god’s rain. The principal’s and my power are just enough to suppress the evil god somewhat...”

“Teacher, didn’t you tell us that it is your suppressed power that was released...! The evil god is too pitiful, if it gets the blame for everything!”

The classmate spitted out her words, complaining about the irresponsible teacher.

“No, the villagers have checked the Tomb of the Evil God. It seems some idiot messed with the seal, and broke it. Apparently, there are still a few missing seal fragments. The evil god and its minions who were sealed away might burst forth at any time. After all, the seal is made specifically for the evil god, so its minions may have already escaped. Therefore, before it is re-sealed, please do not go home alone.”

The homeroom teacher told us.

PART 7

“Hey, do you know? About 7 years ago, when we were still children, the seal of the evil god was broken. There was a big crater before the Tomb of the Evil God, right? It is said that it was the scar left behind by the wandering wizard who re-sealed the evil god.”

Back in the classroom, the classmates were discussing this matter.

In this village, even such unbelievable rumors became the subject of discussion.

I cannot remember the childhood events clearly anymore, but the wandering wizard they mentioned, should be the hooded person who saved me.

Because the teachers left to investigate the evil god, we were dismissed from school today.

The classmates left in groups based on the locations of their homes. Only Yunyun and me remained in the classroom.

My house was at the corner of the Home of the Crimson Magic, so no other classmate lived near me.

The classmates who were going to buy snacks grouped tightly together, saying, "This is tasty, that is good too". This was probably one of the reasons why nobody bothered me.

With no other option, I decided to go home alone.

"Ah....."

Yunyun, who also remained in the classroom, reached out her hand with a soft mumble. She seemed to be calling me.

"What is it?"

"Uh? No, nothing, hm... Megumin's house is along my way home, so..."

Yunyun's house was the village chief's house, built in the middle of the village.

If she wanted to walk together to my place, she would need to take detour...

"...Want to go back together?"

"Can I? Ah, but we are rivals. To be this close..."

Yunyun's face seemed to brighten, yet saying such troublesome words. I ignored her, walking out of the classroom quickly. Yunyun

ran out after me.

“Wait! From tomorrow onwards! We’ll resume being rivals starting from tomorrow!”

—Bringing Yunyun outside, the clouds drifted unnaturally.

Did the teacher really cause such an unnatural occurrence just for the sake of a performance?

Burning an expensive talisman just to act cool, the teacher was a true Crimson Magic Clansman.

Although the homeroom teacher was useless in many aspects, this was one aspect you had to acknowledge.

I walked home without stopping. Yunyun, who was following behind, spoke uncertainly.

“Megumin, are you free? Hm, if possible...”

Yunyun invited me to buy some snacks along the way.

Even paying for it.

“Of course, I have no reason to reject. Why is this happening though?”

“Eh? On-, only because I’m a little hungry...”

Yunyun was embarrassed.

“Fine, you are at the puberty stage after all. But as a girl, wouldn’t it be unnatural if your appetite is too big?”

“Wait! Megumin, you have no right to say that! I’m hungry because you ate my lunch! Be-, besides...”

Yunyun’s voice suddenly lowered.

“Buying snacks with a friend, shopping on the way home... That is... I’m somewhat looking forward to it...”

“Ah? What did you say?”

Yunyun mumbled something, so I intentionally turned back and positioned my ear before her to listen.

At first, Yunyun embarrassingly lied that she didn't say anything. But after I interrogated her multiple times, she finally cried and repeated her previous statement clearly.

PART 8

"Welcome! Welcome to Crimson Magic Clan's top rated coffee shop! Isn't this Megumin, Hyoizaburo's daughter? I heard you are very conscientious in school. Everyone says that you are the top genius of Crimson Magic Clan. I seldom see you eating out, what would you like to order?"

"I want something with plenty of calories that can make you feel full easily."

"Megumin, this is not the way a girl should order food! Hm. The chef's recommendation..."

Yunyun and I arrived at the terrace of the village's only coffee shop.

The shop owner brought us the menu. He seemed to be my father's acquaintance.

"Recommendations... 'Stew of Dark God's Blessing', and also 'Spicy Noodles in Lava Dragon's Breath Style'."

"I want spicy noodles."

"Give me this one on the menu, 'Sacrificial Lamb Sandwich for the Demon God'."

"Okay! Dicey Doodles in Lava Dragon's Breath Style, Sacrificial Lamb Sandwich for the Demon God. Please wait a moment!"

"It's Spicy Noodles!"

Yunyun red-facedly corrected the dish name in a serious tone. I slowly drank the complimentary fruit juice.

“Megumin, Megumin. Although it’s out of the blue, may I ask a question?”

“What? Since it’s your treat, I will answer normal questions. Is it about my weakness? My current weakness is sweets. After-meal dessert is my weakness.”

“I’m not asking this! Besides, what kind of weakness is that? Normally, you would eat in big mouthfuls.”

“Isn’t it commonly said – ‘Sweets are a girl’s enemy!’ What do you want to ask then?”

I pressed her. Suddenly, Yunyun became hesitant.

Looking at this girl’s expression aroused my sadism.

“Megumin, do you have a boy that you like?”

“Yunyun is in heat!”

Hearing her words, I stood up in shock. Yunyun explained hurriedly while nearly crying.

“No, not like that! Think about it, chatting among girls tends to be trivial, right? I merely yearn for such conversations! I don’t have someone I like!”

Her words reassured me, so I sat down again.

“How should I put this? Yunyun, you are a strange kid by Crimson Magic Clan standards. I heard that, during physical education lesson, you could not decide on a cool pose because of your shyness.”

“Am I really strange? Since I was young, I always felt that the villagers are somewhat weird...”

Weird Yunyun felt dejected because of what I said.

She had no friend in class, probably due to her weirdness.

“So, what type of guys does Yunyun like?”

“Eh?”

Facing my question, red-faced Yunyun rolled her eyes in shock.

“Don’t you want to chat? Being trivial. By the way, for me, I won’t accept any guy who lends out money only if he gains some benefits. It would be best if he sets high goals, works hard day and night, is honest and serious.”

“Someone serious and kind huh. Megumin has a gentle side and is good at taking care of others, so you will attract an opposite type, those unsalvageable bums... That hurts, hurts! I am just kidding!... I like the mature and sturdy type who will listen to my everyday life warmly...”

—Peaceful afternoon time.

I chatted endlessly with my self-proclaimed rival, as we went back home.

PART 9

“I’m home.”

“Welcome home, big sister!”

Upon reaching home, my sister, who was younger by a few years, ran out of the house to greet me.

Komekko, who was just 5 years old, had hair slightly shorter than mine.

Komekko wore my old robe. The excessively long portion was already stained with mud.

“Ah... The robe’s edges are muddy. I asked you to watch the house. Did you run out to play again?”

“Yes! I defeated the newspaper man, then I went out to play!”

“Oh, you won again today. You are truly my younger sister.”

“Yes! I said, ‘I have not eaten any solid food for 3 days.’ After that,

he left behind some food coupons!”

Komekko showed off the fruits of her labor in satisfaction.

As I patted the head of my excellent sister, Komekko suddenly sensed something.

“There is a fragrance on big sister’s body.”

“You are truly my younger sister. I brought this back. ‘Sacrificial Lamb Sandwich for the Demon God’! Eat until you explode!”

“Awesome! A feeling like becoming a demon king. Then, the dinner I caught will become tomorrow’s breakfast instead!”

Komekko, who loved sandwiches, said suddenly.

...Dinner that was caught.

I remembered back then, Komekko caught some cicadas, and suggested frying them to eat. I suddenly felt terrified.

“Komekko, what did you say the dinner is? What have you caught?”

“Want to see? I defeated it after a deadly battle. A savage black beast!”

Komekko left behind this frightening statement, and ran back into the house.

I hope it’s not a bug! I hope it’s not a bug!

As I waited, I kept praying. Shortly after, Komekko carried something out...

“...Meow...”



That was a black kitten which, for some reason, was exhausted.

“...You really caught a big one.”

“Yes. I worked hard! It was fighting back at first, but it became

docile after I bit it a few times.”

“Although victory is a good thing, you shouldn’t just randomly bite things.”

Komekko nodded obediently after hearing this. I took the black kitten.

The black kitten hid itself in my arms. It seemed to have had a bad experience, fearfully nudging its head into my chest.

Komekko took big bites out of the sandwich, then pausing to stare at the sandwich still in her mouth, offered it to me.

“...Wanna eat?”

“I ate already. Komekko can eat it all. Anyway, I will take care of this furball, okay?”

“Okay!”

Komekko indulged herself in eating the sandwich.

—I let the kitten into my room. As it boldly curled up on my bed, I whispered softly.

“What am I to do with this cat?”

For it to be this shameless, perhaps it wasn’t just a normal stray.

But it could not become breakfast as Komekko wanted. There was no spare food in the family to feed it either.

And if I released it and it got caught by Komekko again, it will definitely become Komekko’s meal... Then—

PART 10

—The classroom was so noisy.

“...Megumin... ...Megumin...”

“Good morning, Yunyun. Why do you have such an expression on

your face?”

Yunyun frowned anxiously, and greeted me in return.

“...What is that?”

“My familiar.”

Yunyun was asking about the black cat lying on its back on the desk as it played with my fingers. I introduced it again to everyone.

“This is my familiar.”

“Familiar!? I originally thought that only wizards in myths own familiars!”

“Look at its cute and fearless face! This cat is too scary. It must be pretending to be pure and innocent, eyeing our lunch boxes for her master Megumin!”

“This is not what I wanted! But— here’s some food!”

My classmates were all charmed by the charisma of my familiar.

Maybe this kitten truly possessed bewitching power.

It looked like it will get its own food by staying here. I was relieved.

“Wow, wow, wow! ...It’s smooth and soft...! Megumin, what is its name? Have you given it a name yet?”

Yunyun’s eyes sparkled and she probably wanted to touch the kitten. But as Yunyun reached out her hand, the cat raised its front paw menacingly.

Rejected by the cat, Yunyun put down her hand with a sense of loneliness.

“What’s with this kitten? Feels like it is not too friendly towards anyone other than Megumin.”

As Arue spoke, the kitten accepted her out-stretched finger, enjoying her caress with its eyes half-closed. Seeing this, Yunyun felt like crying.

“It doesn’t have a name yet. If I leave it at home, its life will be in danger, so I want to bring it to school daily.”

Hearing this, my classmates frowned, looking troubled.

“The kitten is so cute, so I’m fine, but what will the teacher think...”

“Yes, although it’s very cute, the teacher probably won’t allow it. Although it’s really very cute.”

As expected, the homeroom teacher was the biggest obstacle...

“Rejected.”

The homeroom teacher said upon entering the classroom.

I raised the cat which was putting its best effort to act cute.

“Teacher, this is my familiar. It feeds on my mana. If it leaves me, it will surely die.”

“No. How can someone who cannot use magic have a familiar? The school forbids bringing familiars and snacks! Put it back where it belongs.”

As expected, it didn’t work. Then...!

“Teacher, this is the other me. It’s my other half that holds my power. Although most of the power is with me, it is still another aspect of me. We are of one mind, and cannot be separated!”

“...It seems your other half hates being carried by you, and is struggling for its life.”

“Because I’m about to enter the rebellious stage.”

I put down the cat, and it started to scratch the classroom walls.

“Your other half is currently indulging in its instinct to sharpen its claws.”

“Crimson Magic Clan must be always ready for battle, so it must sharpen its claws. Because most of the intelligence and reason are with me, so my other half only has the power, the instinct, and its

animalistic appearance.”

“Alright then.”

“At first glance, it looks like a very cute me, but inside... You allow it?”

The homeroom teacher suddenly allowed it without a fuss... originally, I still planned to explain how me and my other half were in a deadly conflict over this body.

“Because it is very amusing, so let it be.”

Our homeroom teacher was well-known for being amused by improper matters, but her statement made me uneasy.

“Hey, Megumin! Pee and crap only in the designated area! Look, it’s here, here! You can only pee here! Well done! Megumin is remarkable!”

“.....”

“Doesn’t it stink to put Megumin’s leftover food here? Best to leave it at the back.”

“.....”

“Ah, really, Megumin! Don’t sharpen your claws everywhere! Don’t show such a cute expression, while tilting your head! No... Ah, Megumin is really too cute!”

“AHHHHHHH!”

“Oh no! Fake Megumin has suddenly gone berserk! Looks like it isn’t only cuteness alone, she has finally lost her intelligence and reason to her other half as well!”

The classmate who called me “Fake Megumin” shouted aloud, after seeing me flipped my table.

“Who are you calling a fake? I’m the real Megumin! Don’t keep calling it Megumin again and again!”

“What’s the matter, Megumin? You said the Megumin over there is

your other half, right? The Megumin who possesses intelligence and reason, while the other Megumin possesses power and instinct, right?”

“Megumin, Megumin, Megumin, Megumin —everyone calling my name everywhere, I cannot take it anymore! Please give this cat a name!”

Seeing my angry expression, Yunyun hugged my other self.

“Even if you say that, it has been decided today that ‘this is the real Megumin’... Look, it is finally starting to accept me. I can hug Megumin now! ...Instead of giving this one a name, why not change Megumin’s name? Ouch, ouch!”

“Traitor! You don’t care about your rival changing names! The name ‘Megumin’ has been called more times today than in all my schooling days combined!”

Hearing my complaints, my classmates showed bitter expressions.

“And it finally have a cute name like Megumin...”

“Ah... My cute Megumin is being bullied by the not-cute Megumin...”

“Hey, are you picking a fight?!”

As a Crimson Magic Clansman, who never backed down from a fight, I raised my chair, ready to throw it at my classmates.

“...Norisuke.”

Arue muttered word by word, considering the cat’s alternate name.

“...Perekichi.”

Another student whispered.

“Choisa”, “Marumo”, “Kasuma”.

But it seemed none of these names were satisfactory. The cat in Yunyun’s arms made a noise with its nose, as if it was sneezing.

Hearing the countless alternate names, Yunyun lifted the cat.

“This cat is female...”

“...As expected, the most appropriate name is still Megumin.”

“I’ll kill you!”

As I confronted that classmate, Yunyun suddenly shouted.

“Kuro! Kuro! ...How about it? See, because it’s a black cat...”

“.....” X2

The surrounding fell into silence.

“That’s not bad. It’s easier to remember weird names.”

“Eh!? Ver- very weird...!?”

...Yes, it was truly a strange name, but maybe it would be easier to remember.

After being named, the cat in Yunyun’s arms narrowed its eyes, as if it was happy.

“Then, it will temporarily use this strange name ‘Kuro’. When it truly becomes my familiar, I’ll seriously give it a grand-sounding name.”

“Strange? Hey, as expected, I’m really weird!? In this village, the strange one is me!?”

Yunyun complained with tears in her eyes. I hugged Kuro.

PART 11

“Hey, Megumin. Want to go shopping at the accessory shop today?”

On the way home from school...

Yunyun said before that being close to me was limited only to yesterday, but for some reason she was still following behind me today.

But I never considered her to be a rival anyway, so this wasn’t bad.

“There is an accessory shop in this village?”

“The blacksmith makes accessories on a whim. Hm. Megumin...”

“Admiring cute accessories with someone else on the way home is your dream, right? Fine, let’s go then.”

Yunyun and I went to the blacksmith.

“Welcome! Oh, so it is the weird girl from the chief’s house and the weirdo Hyoizaburo’s daughter. Want to buy something? For little girls like you... How about this great sword? There are also axes and hammers.”

“Weird, weird girl...”

“Why do you want to give a delicate girl such crude weapons? There is no need for us to use weapons anyway.”

Furthermore, it is strange enough that someone is selling weapons and armors in a village of wizards.

Making staves would be more reasonable...

“It is also great to have girls swinging huge weapons. Contrastingly cute.”

“In what world would there be girls like that... Yunyun, what should we do?”

Yunyun was looking around inside the shop.

“Hm. I heard that this place sells accessories...”

“Accessories are over there. Crimson Magic Clansmen only like ridiculously long and complex sword-like weapons. So those things are not in much demand.”

The big blacksmith gestured to a corner with his chin.

Hm... Should this be called an accessory or a small knife...

“Normally, when one speak of accessories, it refers to small wearable items, not small weapons.”

“Even if you say that... Because I don’t have such customers, I would have to close my shop down if not for such items.”

The shopkeeper must have chosen the wrong location for his shop.

Anyway, how does the shopkeeper make money?

“From your expressions, you seem to be wondering how I make a living. After all, I’m still an arch wizard, who can use my vast mana to control furnaces that cannot be controlled normally and create high quality armors. Among armor lovers, my armors are fairly popular. Although I can’t say her name, the daughter of a noble family loves to wear my armor.”

“Why would the daughter of a noble family wear armor? Yunyun, it’s almost time to...”

Yunyun carefully picked up a silver dagger, and looked at me.

“...You like this?”

Yunyun nodded.

Back home, Komekko made a muddy mess of her robes as usual.

“Welcome home, sis! Brought anything to eat?”

“No food today. By the way, where did you go again? Recently, the seal of the evil god in the village is about to break, so do not go out.”

I didn’t know how much of my words Komekko actually heard. She just stared at Kuro in my arms.

“... (gulp)”

“!”

Horried of Komekko, Kuro climbed up from my shoulder, trying to hide inside my hat.

To think it climbed up her owner’s body. What an audacious cat.

“Sis, dinner is meat!”

I shivered slightly at my younger sister, who treated both pets and

bugs as food.

“Komekko, wait a bit longer. This cat is too thin. It doesn’t have much meat to eat. Let it grow fatter before eating.”

“I see. Sis is so clever!”

Komekko smiled heartily. I don’t know what she was doing outside to become like this. I used my handkerchief to wipe the mud on her face.

“Komekko has been playing outside again?”

“I found a toy, let’s play together! Sis also wants to play?”

Toy... Toy?

For some reason, this term didn’t make me feel relieved. Or rather, it made me very concerned.

Yes. Probably, I also...

“Sis, take a bath! Wash the kitten as well. I think this step is called ‘Removing Astringency’.”

“Komekko, the kitten is shivering inside my hat, so don’t say anymore.”

PART 12

After I bathed with Komekko and Kuro, we ate a simple dinner, and returned to my own room.

The stairs were slightly noisy, so mother had probably returned.

Father was definitely still making magic tools without rest.

I lay on the woolen blanket, putting Kuro on my belly.

Then I remembered.

“Speaking of toys. When I met her, I asked her to help me find my toys.”

I mumbled to myself in the dark room, lifting Kuro up before me and looking into its eyes.

In the darkness, Kuro seemed to understand what I said, staring at me without blinking.

Fearless, big, round, and cute eyes.

...Why?

Whenever I see this cat, I will think of that person.

I covered my head with the blanket. It naturally sneaked beneath the blanket as well.

“Hey, you are arrogant for a freeloader.”

Under my blanket, I enjoyed the sensation of stroking Kuro, who curled up on my belly.

At this time, I still thought that I would not be leaving the village for a while—

Spending my time schooling and caring for my sister, an unchanging life—

INTERLUDE: A PRELUDE

—The Unsolvable Jigsaw Puzzle and Seal of the Evil God—

I arrived at the playground that I frequently visit.

Squatting before the tombstone was...

“What a big goblin!”

“...Hey, brat, don’t compare me to a goblin.”

“I’m not a brat. I’m Komekko.”

“Is it? ...Hey, Komekko, what are you doing here? This is the tomb where the other half of the evil god, Lady Wolbach, was sealed. Your family members did not tell you to avoid this place?”

“They did, but sis said that Crimson Magic Clansmen should not yield to unreasonable demands.”

“...Is, is that so? How troublesome, to think that I have no choice but to eliminate such a brat...”

Sprouting a pair of bat wings, huge and black, the not-goblin lowered its shoulders.

“I’m not a brat, I’m Komekko. Not-a-goblin guy, what are you doing here?”

“Not-a-goblin guy... Hey, brat, look closely! I have huge horns and wings, which signify evil! Also, goblins do not have such a muscular body! I am the aide of the evil god Lady Wolbach. I’m the greater demon Lord Hoost. Remember it!”

“So cool!”

Looking at Hoost with his outstretched wings, I raised my arms and cheered.

“Oh, oooh, is it... You have good taste. Normally, I have to silence any witness, but I will let you go as an exception. But you must not tell anyone about me. Everything that happens here must be kept a secret. This is a special treatment, so be grateful!”

“Thank you very much.”

Although I didn’t know what was going on, I thanked him anyway. I sat in front of Hoost, and patted on his big, hard leg. “Pat! Pat! Pat!”

“What a strange brat... Never mind, I have important things to do. Do not disturb me, understand?”

Hoost turned his face away, and fiddled with something before the tombstone... Ah!

“That’s my puzzle!”

“Eh? This is not yours. This is a precious item that can break the seal of Lady Wolbach... Hey, hey, hey, you...!”

I put the puzzle together. Hoost was surprised for some reason.

“You are pretty competent! While I was hiding from the villagers, I could not solve the puzzle even after a few months... Okay, I know what to do next! Hey, give it to me!”

“Ahah, Hoost snatched them away!”

“Eheh, I don’t care what you say. Also, don’t call my name directly, you little brat. You should call me Lord Hoost! Now, Lady Wolbach can fully recover his power. Hereafter, he can rampage as before... Uh, what is this, strange...”

After snatching away the puzzle pieces, Hoost attempted to fit the pieces on the pedestal before the tombstone, but failed repeatedly. Finally, he sagged his shoulders, and looked at me.

“...Hey, Komekko, I will make a special exception to let you play with this puzzle. You may continue.”

“I’m hungry, so I don’t want to play puzzle now. Lord Hoost, take your time with it.”

“.....Although I’m ashamed to say this, but, you better stop calling me Lord Hoost. I will find food for you, so you help me solve the puzzle, Komekko.”

“.....”

“.....Please, Komekko.”

“I understand.”

Hearing my reply, Hoost unwillingly beat his wings to fly off somewhere.

I watched him fly off, then picked up the puzzle pieces once more—

Chapter 2

LONELY MASTER OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC CLAN



PART 1

“Megumin! We must have a match today, understand?”

Due to the weather-control effects of a particular teacher, there was a clear blue sky today.

When I entered the classroom, I was immediately pestered by Yunyun.

For some reason, she was in a very good mood.

—I understood the reason.

The silver dagger purchased a few days ago was hanging by her waist.

She intentionally touched it a few times to draw my attention to it. So annoying.

Did she want me to say that the dagger suited her?

I was not her boyfriend. I didn't want to accommodate such a troublesome attitude.

"No problem, I accept. But I don't have any potions left to wager. How should we go about it?"

"Wager... If I win, Megumin will have to obey one command from me..."

"Okay. The match content will be biased towards you then. How about you use that cool dagger by your waist to settle this?"

"Use this dagger? Okay. Although I don't know what it is really about, I accept!"

I led the confident Yunyun to my seat, putting my palm on the desk.

"Please use your dagger to continuously stab the space between my fingers. Before I count to ten, if you do not miss the spaces, you win. Simple, right?"

"Wait! Wait! No, no, this definitely is a no!"

"No problem, I believe in Yunyun's ability. Even if I get stabbed, I will endure the pain. Then let's start! One! Two!"

“Never mind! I surrender today!”

The scene was unchanged for today.

“...Ah. Thanks for the treat. The taste is great today as well.”

“Yes... Once in a while, I also want to have a serious match...”

Yunyun choked on her words as she took the meal box from me.

“...By the way, Yunyun, how many more skill points do you need to learn advanced magic?”

“Points? Another... three points. I can learn advanced magic with three more points. At that time... I will graduate... How many more points does Megumin need?”

In Crimson Magic Clan school, a student would graduate whenever she learned magic.

Hearing Yunyun’s question, I looked at my adventurer’s card, which displayed 46 skill points.

In the skill list, the words “Learning advanced magic requires 30 skill points” were glowing.

But I wanted to learn Explosion magic. To learn that, I still needed...

“Still short of four points, which means Yunyun will graduate before me.”

“Eh!? Wait, Megumin’s results have always been good, why do you have less points than me? More importantly... Ah!? I’m going to graduate alone...!”

As Yunyun became worried, the homeroom teacher arrived.

The noisy classroom quieted down. Standing on the podium, the teacher held the name list.

“Taking attendance now.”

The classmates responded when they were called.

“...Dodonko! Nerimaki! Funifura!”

Since there were only 11 students in this classroom, my turn came quickly.

“Megumin! ...also Yunyun!”

“Present! ...Teacher, what’s with this? You said ‘also’, right? Did you almost forget about me again?”

“Okay, okay, starting lesson... or so I’ll like to say. Recently, the monsters near the village are getting active. The principal asked me to lead the hikikomori^[RM]... no, the people with free time to hunt monsters. You can go home in the afternoon. It will be self-study in the library during the morning.”

Yunyun became teary-eyed as she was ignored. The teacher left after speaking.

—This was the Crimson Magic Village that even the demon king feared.

Monsters were rarely active here.

The nearby monsters usually would not come near the village...

I looked for books in the library, while still being bothered by this issue.

I wanted to read the sequel of the book I read a few days ago.

“Rhodes the Untamed” Volume 2, “Rhodes the Untamed” Volume 2...

—Found it.

“Yunyun, I’m looking for that book in your hands. You have taken so many books. If you are not reading it immediately, can I borrow it first?”

Yunyun was holding “Rhodes the Untamed” Volume 2 and a few other books.

“Uh... sure, Megumin reads this type of books too? Here, for you.”

Yunyun handed me “You Can Communicate Even With Goblins” and “Be Friends With Monsters”.

“Who says I want this?! Not these, it’s ‘Rhodes the Untamed!’”

“Eh? Megumin likes this? This book is very interesting. I read it a few times already! Volume 2 ‘The False King Appears’ has an unexpected ending with the old king and his two retainers leaving on a journey...”

“Please, no spoilers! ...By the way, what’s with your choice of other books? The titles are too painful... Too painful.”

“Don’t be like this, Megumin. Why are you looking at me with such sympathetic eyes! Look here, even cactus has feelings right? That means, it is possible to be friends with plants...!”

...What was it with this girl?

“I can’t stand you. If you want friends so much, just cancel your declaration of me as your rival...”

“—Hey, Yunyun. Are you still reading such books? If you want friends so much, I can also be your friend.”

I turned to look at the person who interrupted. It is the classmate who talked to Yunyun previously... classmate... what’s her name?

“Isn’t it Funikura or something? Friends aren’t made intentionally, but naturally.”

“My name is Funifura! Please remember your classmate’s name!”

Yunyun suddenly came close to the fuming Funifura.

“What did you say earlier? What, what did you say earlier!?”

“Hey, you are standing too close. Your face is too close! I only said we can be friends...”

Faced with the up-close, serious-looking Yunyun, Funifura slowly backed away, and explained quickly.

Hearing her, Yunyun nodded a few times, embarrassed.

Oh... Yunyun, the forever alone, finally had a friend!

Although my worry for Yunyun's future was a bit unasked for, I could be relieved now...!

"Ugh... I'm inexperienced, please guide me along!"

"Hey, Yunyun, do you know what 'friend' means? Do you really know?"

...I could... be relieved... probably.

PART 2

"Hey, Yunyun! I will give you a new one! It's just a rubber band for tying hair. If it is lost, I'll just give you a new one! Megumin already repents, it's not an issue!"

"But, but...! This is the first gift I received from a friend...!"

—I totally could not be relieved.

Funifura wanted Yunyun to be a bit prettier, so she gave her a rubber band.

Yunyun was overjoyed to receive a gift. She went out of her way back to the classroom, and carefully kept it in the desk. Then—

"Why did Megumin search my desk!? Why did you play and shoot off my rubber band! Are you a 3-year-old kid!?"

I got bored of reading, and returned to the classroom early. I snapped and shot the rubber band out of the window. That was all.

—I was kneeling on the classroom floor.

"It's not that. Look, there's a bug on the tree outside the window. I'm very bothered by such bugs, so I wanted to shoot it down. I used up all my rubber bands, so I have no choice but to borrow yours..."

"It's not 'no choice'. This isn't what a girl should be playing. I can't stand you...!"

Yunyun looked at me, who was bowing my head, and sighed.

“Funifura, sorry! It is so difficult for me to receive a gift! I originally intended to keep it in my safe at home...!”

“No need to be like that! It’s ridiculous! Rubber bands are meant to be used!”

Funifura said off-handedly, feeling a bit scared of Yunyun.

“Forget about it. It’s almost lunch time. Let’s ask Dodonko to eat together.”

“Can, can I? Eating lunch together, it’s like being friends!”

“I said before, we are already friends!”

Yunyun’s loneliness was a sickness that developed too far.

“Indeed, it’s almost lunch time, let’s go quickly.”

I, who was ordered to sit straight on the floor, stood up, ready to follow them...

“...Megumin, did you bring a packed lunch?”

“No.”

“This won’t do.”

I replied, and Funifura shot me down.

...Oh dear.

It was a good thing for Yunyun to make friends.

But at the same time, the poor me would lose my important supply line.

I looked worriedly at Yunyun, who was preparing to leave with her lunch box.

“Megumin, hm... if it is half... Hey, don’t hug me! Also, don’t worship me!”

—But, as the saying went, three women made up a drama.

“That person is definitely interested in me! But what to do? Also, I have someone whom I made a life-long promise with in my previous life. Is this adultery then? More or less.”

“It doesn’t matter. The previous life is not this life. My fated partner is set... no, should be the handsome guy who was sealed in the deepest dungeon, so I must learn advanced magic fast to rescue him.”

What was this unbearable conversation?

“Is that so? The two of you are incredible!”

Yunyun smiled nervously, and responded off-handedly.

As I ate lunch with my classmates Funifura and Dodonko, the love topic never stopped.

They seemed to have their ideal lovers and reality in a mix of confusion.

“What about Yunyun? Your type... no, your lover in the previous life, what is he like?”

Dodonko asked as she forked her salad.

“Me? I don’t have memories of past lives... A mature and stable person, who can gently listen to my daily affairs...”

“Too unromantic.”

“Very unromantic.”

“This can’t be helped. Yunyun is a weird person, after all. By the way, my previous life should be a god of destruction, so I had no lover. Ah, I’m full, so tasty.”

“Weird person!? Hey, am I really weird? Also, Megumin— I said I’ll give you half! Why did you eat it all?!”

PART 3

On the way home from school.

“Great, Yunyun finally has friends. I even suspected that Yunyun’s previous life is a giant isopod^[w], and will be lonely forever. I was so worried.”

I said to the overjoyed Yunyun.

“I did not choose to be alone! ...Megumin, your mouth. Ah, a girl should be conscious of her appearance. There’s some soy sauce.”

Yunyun said, and used her handkerchief to wipe my mouth, just like my mother.

“I used to think that Yunyun is a child who cannot fit into society, and will be easily tricked by a bad guy who pretends to be her friend. Now, I am relieved.”

“I used to think that Megumin is a child who lacks the means to survive, and will be easily tricked by a bad guy who treats her to a meal. Now, I am relieved.”

Yunyun, who was wiping my mouth, and I stared at each other, and immediately backed off.

“You said something very strange. You mean I am a stupid girl who will blindly follow a bad guy for a meal?”

“Megumin is like that. Besides, you underestimated me. You think I’m a frivolous girl who will blindly follow a bad guy just to be friends?”

I confronted Yunyun by the roadside, smiling viciously.

“Ah, I can easily imagine a future in which Yunyun is at the beck and call of a useless guy who told her ‘Let’s be friends.’”

“I can also imagine Megumin being at a loss due to a lack in the means of survival, begging a useless guy for a meal!”

...It looked like it was time to settle the score with this self-proclaimed rival.

I took on a defensive position. Yunyun became wary.

In this hair-trigger moment, a sound suddenly interrupted.

“Eh? Isn’t this Megumin who live nearby?”

I turned and looked. It was the shoe-maker’s son who lived near my house.

“Isn’t this Buzucoily? What are you doing here?”

To me and Komekko, he was a neighbor who was like a big brother. But he idled around every day, declaring that he needed to conserve his power before the world needed him.

It was rare for him to be wandering outside.

“The monsters are getting active, even coming close to the village. I was driving the nearby monsters away. Ah, since I was told ‘Now is the time to use your reserved power!’, I have been full of adrenaline.”

Oh, yes. The homeroom teacher mentioned something about leading the hikikomori in the village to hunt monsters.

He was merely being forced to work, but seeing his self-satisfied look, I decided not to spoil his mood.

“Oh, there are even monsters that you do not usually see. What’s the name? To think that such monsters exist near the village...”

Buzucoily said softly and made eye contact with Yunyun.

“...Mine is the name of Buzucoily, an arch wizard who wields advanced magic... the son and successor of the top shoe-maker in Crimson Magic Village...! You must be the chief’s daughter. Pleased to meet you.”

“Ah! Yes, I’m Yunyun. Please to meet you...”

Buzucoily made his exaggerated self-introduction. Embarrassed, Yunyun lowered her head and introduced herself softly.

It was rare for her to have a chance to introduce herself. This little girl is really strange.

“What are you two doing? There’s a sense of tension that a battle might erupt in any moment.”

“Yes! This woman and I are about to have a death duel to determine who is stronger! Yunyun, let’s start!”

“Wait! Aren’t we having a normal match? I still don’t have that kind of determination!”

PART 4

I opened the loosely-closed door of my house, and greeted the darkness.

“I’m home.”

Following the sound of footsteps, a welcoming voice said.

“Welcome home, sis!”

Komekko ran forward, smiling.

Her face and her robe were muddied.

It looked like she went out to play again.

“Komekko, I don’t know where you went, but the monsters are appearing near the village. Someone said that he encountered a strange monster. Try not to go out.”

“Okay! I will try not to go out!”

“...More accurately, it should be ‘Do not go out.’”

Komekko handed me a piece of paper.

“...? What is this?”

“A pretty woman, who looked a bit ill, came by. She asked, ‘Is there a magic item artisan here?’ I answered, ‘No magic item artisan.’ She whispered, ‘Is that so.’ And left after giving me this.”

...? I looked closely, this appeared to be an order form for magic items.

At the edge, in a beautifully written script:

“I’m impressed by the many excellent magic items you have created. Please maintain good business contact with my shop...”

There was also praises for my father at the back.

...Father was a magic item artisan.

But, even though his magic items have great power, all of them were flawed.

I did not know where this shopkeeper came from, but she probably confused my father with someone else.

Otherwise, this shopkeeper’s business sense must be abnormal.

“Yeah. If she wasn’t confused, then it must be mockery. Her shop’s location is the rookie city Axel. The shop name is...”

—Before I finished reading, Komekko pulled my sleeves.

“Sis, I’m hungry! Make dinner! I have prepared the ingredients!”

“Fine, I’ll make some food for you today... but there isn’t much ingredient left, just some vegetables.”

Komekko dragged me to the kitchen. The pot, plates, and seasoning were all prepared.

There were also some cut vegetables.

I was thinking of making vegetable soup, when a soft sound was heard suddenly from the pot.

“.....?”

I removed the pot cover. Inside it was...

“...Komekko, wait for it to be fatter before eating.”

“It’s fatter today when compared to yesterday! When can we eat it? Tomorrow?”

“Let’s wait a few more days.”



I fed Komekko a lot for breakfast today, so I thought it would be okay to leave Kuro at home. It looked like I still have to bring it along to school.

—After deciding this, I picked Kuro out of the pot.

PART 5

Today was a school holiday.

This was a frightening day every week. For me, it was an unbearable day.

The reason was...

“Sis, good morning! No school today, right? Let’s eat breakfast!”

“...Komekko, mother should have prepared breakfast before leaving home. You can eat my share as well. I can conserve my calories, so I don’t want to do anything today.”

I lay beneath the blanket without moving.

But Komekko did not leave.

“Without going to school, sis won’t be able to eat Yunyun’s breakfast. Let’s eat together!”

...Hearing this, I unwillingly got out of bed.

Without going to school, I could not get food from Yunyun.

I would normally eat my breakfast in school, so I could leave my own portion to Komekko, who was still growing.

My gentle sister would invite me to share a meal during the holidays.

“It can’t be helped then. What is for breakfast today?”

“Rice balls and salmon!”

“...That’s all we can do at the end of the month. But I don’t like salmon, so Komekko can have it.”

“...Then let’s feed it.”

Komekko said, looking at Kuro who came out of the blanket with me.

It seemed that she wanted to eat it.

I patted my gentle sister's head...

“..... (gulp).....”

...I urged my sister, who was drooling and staring at Kuro, to the kitchen.

“Kuro, do you want to eat the skin of my salmon?”

“Meow.”

“The skin is nutritious, so make sure you finish everything.”

After eating with Komekko, I considered what to do for today.

—Father was a magic item artisan, but his products were flawed, so business wasn't good.

Even if they were sold, they must be heavily discounted, so my family had always been poor.

At the end of each month, both my parents went to sell the magic items in town, leaving me and my sister together at home.

Father said they would leave this morning, and would not return for a few days.

There should not be much food left in the refrigerator.

Then...

“Komekko. I'm going into the village. Perhaps I can find some food...”

Bite!

“Meow!”

...Following the sound of something being bitten, Kuro cried out softly.

“...Did you bite Kuro again?”

“It doesn’t taste good when eaten raw.”

—It looked like I must hurry.

“Komekko, be good. Your target is the old man. I will use my great charisma on the young man.”

“My sister is a Femme Fatale!”

“Eh, eh! Komekko, I don’t want to do this, but the situation in the refrigerator is really bad... We were just talking about him, and the sheep appears.”

Komekko hugged Kuro tightly like a doll. I took her hand, acting like a good sister, moving gradually towards the sheep.

“Isn’t this Buzucoily, the handsome guy from the shoe shop? Good morning! Nice weather today.”

“...I have no work, so you can’t con money from me.”

Buzucoily was practicing his poses for grand entrance in the yard. He warned me with a smile, making the first strike before I could say more.

I thought he was a useless hikikomori, but it seemed he should not be underestimated.

“I would never ask my respected Buzucoily, who looked after me since I was young, for money. We are just a bit hungry.”

“Where is the respect? You are just trying to scam me! I have no work and no lover, so there is no way I can steal food from my house for you. Sorry, you better find someone else...”

“Big brother, I’m really hungry!”

“Wait, Komekko! Big brother will pilfer some food for you right now!”

I watched Buzucoily run off, and said to my sister whom I was still holding hands,

“.....Starting from today, you may call yourself Femme Fatale Komekko.”

“Mine is the name of Komekko! Watching the house be my job. I am Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One Femme Fatale little sister!”

Thereafter, my Femme Fatale little sister received a lot of tributes.

PART 6

“Megumin, you know, right!?”

For some reasons, Yunyun was always in high spirits in the morning. She came to me as soon as I entered the classroom.

“I know, now is breakfast time. Thanks for the meal too.”

“What has breakfast time got to do with anything?! Why is my defeat a foregone conclusion... Eh, it? You mean Kuro’s meal? I have to feed Kuro too?!”

While Yunyun was shouting, I intentionally grabbed Kuro who was on my shoulder.

“If you are unwilling, I don’t mind. But my family is not rich, so if you don’t accept, it will starve...”

“I understand! I just have to feed it, right? But this will have to wait until Megumin wins! And if I have to prepare its food as well, today’s match content will be decided by me!”

“No problem.”

“If you don’t agree... Eh? Is it really okay?”

I repeated myself to the suspicious Yunyun.

“No problem. Yunyun can decide on the match content.”

“.....!”

Hearing this, Yunyun’s face glowed. She secretly displayed a V hand sign to signify victory.

But her expression stiffened immediately.

“There will be only one match. You cannot say that I am only allowed to determine the content of one match out of three!”

“I won’t change my mind. Who do you take me for?”

I replied instantly, but Yunyun still had not relaxed her wariness of me.

“You won’t make excuses like... ‘The one you defeated is not the real me’, ‘That is not my real strength’, ‘You can only be the real winner if you defeat my second form’.”

“You still remember something from so long ago. By the way, I have four forms. If you win once today, I will admit defeat.”

Hearing this, Yunyun finally relaxed and sighed.

“Then... Then! The match will be arm wrestle! I won’t lose to the physically weak Megumin in this!”

Yunyun put her arm on her desk, rolled up her sleeves, and smiled confidently.

I put Kuro on the desk in sight of Yunyun, then rolled up my sleeves and ready my arm.

As we held hands tightly, our tall, eye patch-wearing classmate, Arue, became interested and came over.

“Arue, good timing. You will be the judge.”

“Sure. Nobody can cheat in the view of my demonic eye. Now, ready...!”

At my request, Arue exaggeratedly removed her eye patch, and knelt properly on the floor.

“Yunyun, if I win this time, you have to feed both Kuro and me. I don’t have any Skill Up Potion today. If you win, what do you want?”

“Eh? My request? Yes, yes, hm... then... to-, together... Starting from tomorrow morning, you will come to school together with me...”

Arue, who was sitting on the floor, placed her chin on the desk.

Holding the desk, she shouted.

“Fight!”

“Ha!”

“Eh? Ahhhh! Wait! Ughhhh!”

I intended to act suddenly to win the instant Arue announced the start. But Yunyun managed to hold on.

Yunyun, who was physically stronger than me, was making a comeback.

Since a sneak attack did not work, I can only...!

“Ah... If this goes on, I won't have breakfast to eat... Yunyun's food is so tasty. I look forward to it every day...”

“!? Ev-, even if you say that! Today, I must win Megumin! And I want to gain the title of Crimson Magic Clan's top genius! Not merely be the chief's daughter, but also gain other titles...!”

Yunyun seemed to be bothered by her special treatment as the chief's daughter.

I originally thought Yunyun challenged me daily only because nobody else would socialize with her...

But I will never let go of my title as the Crimson Magic Clan's top genius...!

“Ah. If this goes on, not only me, even Kurosuke will starve...! My family is too poor to feed Kurobei. For my beloved Kurotaro's sake, I cannot lose...”

“Ah!? That, that... If you care so much for it, don't change its name randomly! You are just making use of it! To take advantage of my kindness!”

Yunyun slightly relaxed the arm as her conscience came under siege. We entered into a stalemate. Arue announced seriously:

“It is now a stalemate! There are 30 seconds left! If victory is not

achieved within the remaining time, both parties will die!”

“What!?” x2

As I was surprised by Arue’s sudden addition to the rules, Kuro walked on the desk towards Yunyun.

It sniffed at our quivering arms, then started to act cute before Yunyun.

“St-, stop, Kuro. Even if I win, I will still feed you...! Don’t act so cute!”

“A pet belongs to her master! If I have nothing to eat, I will snatch Kuro’s food. You better understand this!”

“Despicable!”

“Winner is Megumin!”

Arue announced and raised my right arm up.

PART 7

“Some time ago, I led the village’s hikikomori... no, brave free men to subjugate the monsters nearby. You should know, right? As a result, there are no strong monsters nearby now. I ignored the weak monsters, clearing only the dangerous ones. Today’s lesson is field combat. In the fairly safe area near the village, we will use Crimson Magic Clan’s traditional method of power-leveling to raise everyone’s level. Everyone assemble in the field! Form up three groups of three and one group of two! Go!”

After taking attendance, the teacher explained today’s lesson and left. The classroom became noisy.

The students gathered according to how close they are to each other. Yunyun sat at her desk, stealing glances at me.

“What is it? My self-proclaimed rival, Yunyun.”

“Self-proclaimed!? No, that... is true... Teacher told us to form

groups...”

“Yes. We have to form groups. So what?”

I intentionally used a distant tone of voice. Yunyun became nervous.

.....Seriously.

As usual, she cannot bring herself to ask for team invitation.

Well, I ate her breakfast, so I decided to take the initiative.

“Megumin. If you don’t have a team yet, want to join me?”

I wanted to approach Yunyun, but Arue suddenly approached me.

I remembered we can form a group of three.

“Okay, let’s do it together then.”

“!?”

Yunyun listened to our conversation, becoming confused and unsettled.

Arue and I turned to look at Yunyun.

After a while, Yunyun looked at us, and timidly said,

“Hm, uh, Megumin, I also...”

At the moment before she finished speaking.

“Yunyun, want to team up with us?”

“Oh, right. You were always left behind, right? Just join our team.”

Funifura and Dodonko invited Yunyun.

The two of them smiled and walked to Yunyun’s desk.

After being invited by them, Yunyun stole a glance at me, as if she wasn’t sure what to do.

“Let’s go, Yunyun. We are classmates after all.”

“Yes, yes. We are friends, right!?”

“!? Friends...! Yes, yes, then...”

The term “friends” made the embarrassed Yunyun stood up.

So easily seduced. How unsure of herself.

As expected, Yunyun would be conned by bad guys in the future.

Yunyun seemed reluctant to leave me, but Funifura pushed her out of the classroom.

“This is called being cuckolded, right...”

“!”

I, I wasn't being cuckolded!



PART 8

The teacher lectured in the field, with her cloak fluttering in the wind.

“Everyone is present! If you have a weapon, use your own. Those without them can use these to deliver a final blow to the monsters!”

The teacher said and pointed to the pile of items on the ground.

There was a mountain of different weapons. It was worth mentioning that most of them were...

“Teacher! The weapons are too big. We probably can’t carry them...”

Yes, all the weapons were massive.

The great sword was taller than Arue. The blade of the axe was wider than my body.

The metal ball on the spiked mace looked so heavy, even an ogre could not move it...

The teacher lifted the huge great sword easily.

The teacher was physically weak and thin, yet she could lift it with one hand...!

“The trick is to let your mana infuse every part of your body. This method can temporarily enhance the bodies of Crimson Magic Clansmen. After the previous lessons, you should know the basics. As long as you will it, you can naturally use this power!”

Hearing this, Arue walked forward.

And...

“...My magic power! Surge through my arteries and bestow upon me strength in my limbs!”

Arue shouted, single-handedly lifting the great sword which is longer than her body!

“Oh!” x3

“Eh!? Aw-, awesome...! Although it is awesome, are those words really necessary?”

The other students ignored Yunyun's rumblings, and rushed towards the weapons.

"This one remains undamaged even after receiving my magic power...! I will name you! Yes, from now on, your name will be...!"

Someone lifted the huge axe with both hands, and named the weapon.

"Ha! ...This is a good sword to be able to withstand my slashing. Fine, I will leave my life to you in the future...!"

Someone swung the long sword, smiling fearlessly.

I glanced at the others, and picked a huge axe.

Based on my mana, I should be able to do it too...!

".....Ah, not enough mana...! Burn, my magic power...! Bestow upon me strength and grace...!"

I held the axe handle, stumbling as I lifted it up.

No way, my mana wasn't enough!

I was the Crimson Magic Clan's top genius! Surely I can accomplish such minor task...!

I clenched my teeth and lifted the axe. At this time, Yunyun said next to me.

"Teacher, these weapons are fakes, right...? They are made of wood with metal plating, so they are rather light..."

"Yunyun, deduct 5 points."

"Ah!? Hey, wait—Teacher!"

I tossed away the heavy axe, and picked the smallest wooden sword.

—In the dense forest outside the village.

We stood in a row before the teacher. Each of us held a weapon of our liking.

Everyone's weapons were blunt, except for the real weapon in Yunyun's hands.

That was the silver dagger she bought a few days ago.

"Okay! Listen up. As I said earlier, the powerful monsters were driven off some time ago. Thus, there are only weak monsters, but do not be reckless. I will use magic to disable them, and you will give the immobile monsters the killing blow."

The teacher said, holding a huge ornamental sword.

"There shouldn't be any problem. If there is an emergency, just give me a holler. Dismissed!"

The teacher announced, and then ran off somewhere.

The classmates began to scatter.

—At this time.

"Freeze Bind!"

I heard a voice from the direction where the teacher ran off.

Arue and I ran over, and found...

"Oh..." x2

As the saying went, even a starving camel is bigger than a horse. Our teacher is a Crimson Magic Clansman after all.

A large lizard was frozen from its neck down. It groaned softly. This was probably our teacher's work.

"Freeze Bind!"

We heard our teacher again from a distance.

The teacher was happily disabling the nearby monsters.

Arue and I looked at each other.

"Can I go first?"

I nodded to express agreement.

Arue raised her ornamental great sword with both hands.

“Let your life force become the source of my power!”

The great sword slashed down at the lizard’s head. The frozen lizard groaned and collapsed on the ground.

Arue checked her Adventurer’s Card, nodding in satisfaction.

She probably gained a level.

The Explosion magic I wanted to learn still required 4 skill points.

If I conscientiously hunted monsters, perhaps I could learn magic today!

I looked around, searching for small monsters for experience points. Suddenly, I discovered a team arguing before a horned rabbit. The rabbit was frozen from its neck down.

Yunyun held her dagger, facing the horned rabbit without moving.

It looked like she could not ruthlessly kill the rabbit, which was staring at her with sad eyes and was groaning pitifully.

“Yunyun, kill it fast! We must quickly hunt the next one!”

“Yes, Yunyun is the student with the second best results. You should be our role model!”

The two other team members pressured Yunyun, who did not know what to do with her dagger.

“So-, sorry, when I look at its eyes...! Sorry, I can’t do this!”

Yunyun shook her head, as tears flooded her eyes. She passed her dagger to the other two person, but neither took it.

“Don’t say such willful words during a crucial time! We, the Crimson Magic Clan, are not weaklings! Other people will look down on us, if this goes on!”

“Right, right! It cannot move, so it should be easy. Show us the

power of our Number 2! Strike it...!"

"Then, you should be the one to strike it!"

I stood behind Dodonko, who was pressuring Yunyun. I pushed her forward.

"Eh!? Ahah!"

I snatched the dagger from Yunyun, and pressed it into Dodonko's hands. She screamed.

I hugged Dodonko from behind, and guided the surprised Dodonko forward.

Then...

"Now, Dodonko, kill it! Turn this pitiful big-eyed rabbit into your experience!"

"Wait! Wait! Wait, Megumin, spare me!"

"Why are you hesitating? Let this innocent rabbit become your power...! No need to bother our Number 2 Yunyun. Let me, the Number 1, personally guide you...!"

"Wait! Stop, please, stop! If you pushed me further, the dagger will stab it! It is groaning! It is groaning!"

"Megumin, stop! Dodonko is crying! Stop!"

At this moment, just as Funifura and Dodonko were in a mess.

".....Hey, stop it everyone. A troublesome monster is here."

Arue pointed towards the forest, alerting us.

We looked in that direction and saw a monster.

It was a humanoid demon, with sharp claws on both hands. Its body was thick with black fur, and had a pair of bat wings.

Its reptilian head had a beak. It kept looking around.

It looked rather strong, but more importantly, it wasn't frozen.

We should escape and find the teacher...

—It set its sight on us, as we were sneaking away.

PART 9

“Teacher, teacher, teacher, teacher—!!” x2

Funifura and Dodonko yelled as they ran for their lives.

“Megumin, do you know that thing? It seems to be focused entirely on you.”

“How can I possibly know it? It might be a vanguard of the demon king. It fears my power... By the way, why is it chasing me?!”

“It must be retribution because of Megumin’s evil deeds! A few days ago, I saw you stealing sacrificial food from the altar of Eris!”

Arue and Yunyun said as they ran next to me, while the monster gave chase.

For some unknown reasons, the flying monster pursued only me, ignoring the others.

It must have seen the other students. I was worried about what Yunyun said. Maybe it was my divine retribution.

Arue and I already discarded the cumbersome weapons.

The other teams appeared to have notice our situation, but nobody can use magic...!

I felt something was moving on my back.

It turned out to be Kuro, who was digging its claws into my back to avoid falling off.

—A desperate plan!

I took hold of Kuro, and raised it up high towards the monster..

“There’s no other choice. I present this furball to you! How about it?

It must be tastier than me! Even my sister wanted to eat it!”

“You are truly the top student to think of such a move!”

“Megumin is so heartless! You are being chased by monsters now, because you always do things like this!”

Even after being lectured by Yunyun, I continued to lift Kuro up high. The monster circled in the air, slowly descending before us.

Although it looked fierce, its behavior did not seem hostile.

Funifura and Dodonko already escaped. I faced the monster, as the other students looked on from a distance.

Without a word, Yunyun stood in front of me.

She held her dagger in both hands. The silver blade shone. She kept Arue and me protectively behind her, facing the monster.

Only Yunyun had a real weapon.

It seemed that the coward, who did not dare to kill a rabbit, wanted to protect us.

Next to me, Arue looked at her Adventurer’s Card.

Probably considering if she should learn magic right on the spot.

.....I could already learn advanced magic. But if I did this, I would have to give up on Explosion magic...

But even the cowardly Yunyun became so brave. I cannot lag behind...!

“Lightning of darkness, strike down my foe! Cursed Lightning!”

Following the loud incantation, a black streak of lightning pierced the monster’s chest.

The monster collapsed silently. I looked at the direction of the voice. The teacher ran towards us, still holding on the great sword.

The teacher, who always seem to be wrong in the head, seemed so reliable and cool at this moment.

—The student who went to fetch the teacher said:

“Teacher, your casting was completed long ago, why did you wait until the last moment to release the spell?!”

“? Of course, it is to let me debut in the coolest possible moment!”

.....Not a bit. This teacher was completely bonkers.

PART 10

“Have you heard? The monster, which attacked Megumin, has never appeared nearby before. There should not be any flying monsters near the village.”

Because of the sudden intrusion of the monster, field training was cancelled. We returned to school early. This rumor quickly spread throughout the classroom.

I listened to the conversations and played with Kuro’s tail while it was on the desk. Then, the tired-looking teacher entered the classroom.

The teacher stood at the podium, dejectedly.

“Listen up. I mentioned before that the Tomb of the Evil God will be unsealed soon. After investigation, the monster that appeared this morning during field lesson was probably a minion of the evil god. We are looking for the seal fragments, but we are unsuccessful so far. We must end this matter fast. I will be sent out to continue the monster-hunts... Thus, all afternoon lessons are cancelled. I say again, until the tomb has been sealed again, do not go home alone.”

The teacher announced and left the classroom.

I had no idea what the evil god was supposed to be, but it was really good at causing trouble.

“Megumin..... hm... today.....”

Yunyun wanted to say something, periodically stealing glances at me.

Seriously, she could just directly invite me to go home together.

“.....Yunyun, let-”

“Hey, Yunyun, let’s go home together! I got something to say to you! Besides, I wanted to apologize for leaving you behind earlier!”

Funifura interrupted my conversation suddenly.

“Eh!? Ah..... okay.”

The weak-willed Yunyun did not reject, simply nodded her head slightly.

If an unknown guy was to kneel and beg her, she would probably listen too.

“Then, goo-, goodbye, Megumin. See you tomorrow.....”

Yunyun looked a bit uneasy and lonely, but she still followed the other two home.

.....

It was a good thing that lonely Yunyun could make friends.

Although it was a good thing, it was still a bit.....

I felt a presence behind and turned around. Arue apparently said something.

“.....cuckolded.”

“Say that again, and I will mess with your perky tits!”

PART 11

—The next day.

I brought along Kuro who was sticking to me, and walked into the classroom. This shameless cat simply sprawled itself over my shoulder.

“Ah, Megumin, good morning..... Kuro too, good morning.”

Usually, Yunyun would excitedly challenge me as soon as she saw me, but today she merely greeted me.

“Good morning... What’s up with you? Normally when you see me, you will charge forth like a bandit.”

“I’m not that lawless! Although it is really like that, the way you say it should be... for example, rivals challenging each other...”

Two people came over to the hesitant Yunyun’s side.

Funifura and Dodonko.

“Yunyun, good morning! Thanks a lot for yesterday! As expected, you know your true friends only in times of crisis!”

“Yes, thanks! Yunyun is truly worthy!”

“Ah, that... It is great to help a friend.”

Yunyun smiled, with her face almost glowing.

.....What happened?

“Everyone sit down. I’m taking attendance!”

The teacher arrived as I was wondering whether to ask Yunyun about it.

—After taking attendance, the teacher started to seriously write magical incantations on the blackboard.

Learning magic took more than just skill points.

Firstly, you must memorize all the incantations for the magic you wanted to use.

There were not many spells for elementary magic, and there was no need for long casting. However, advanced magic was different, requiring much effort to learn.

But as the top student, I already memorized every single incantation.

Yunyun, the bored second top student next to me, was probably the same.

With nothing to do, I decided to tease Yunyun.

“What did you do with Funifura yesterday?”

I tore an edge off my notebook and wrote this question down. I rolled into a ball and tossed it at Yunyun’s desk.

Yunyun noticed it and read my message...

“This is secret between friends, so I cannot tell my rival Megumin.”

The reply tossed at my desk contained this message.

.....This pissed me off.

“The lonely kid made some friends for a few days and became arrogant.”

I tossed that over.

“Megumin is always bragging. Actually, you don’t have friends either.”

The reply came back as such.

I shot a glance at Yunyun, and she returned the look in satisfaction.

.....

“Since you have friends now... You won’t challenge me anymore, right? Although I’m happy that you made some friends, I feel somewhat lonely...”

“Wait, sorry, sorry. I didn’t challenge you because of this! Because a lot of things happened yesterday, I’m not in the mood...!”

“Okay, it doesn’t matter. Anyway, although I was always complaining, having a match with Yunyun every morning still makes me happy. And not because I could get a free meal.”

“No! I’m serious! It’s true! You misunderstood! I like having a match with Megumin too. I’m happy to make meals daily as well...!”

“.....I’m satisfied if you can say that. If we are not rivals, I’m sure we can be good friends.”

.....

I tossed that message over, and Yunyun's reply stopped suddenly.

I gazed at Yunyun. She looked embarrassed, but did not move the pen in her hand.

I stared at the area near Yunyun's hand from a distance.

"One day, I want to be Megumin's... friend."

She stopped after writing that.

Seeing Yunyun's expression, I wrote another message on the paper, rolled it up, and tossed it to her.

Red-faced Yunyun saw the paper, and raised her head sharply.

Her expression was full of expectation, and her eyes became teary. But upon opening the paper...!

".....You think I would seriously say something like that? Idiot!"

—Yunyun kicked the chair away, stood up, and pounced at me in tears.

PART 12

In the field before the school, Yunyun and I were still talking.

".....can't stand it. Why can't this kid take a joke?"

"That was not a joke! I will never forgive you! Never!"

Because Yunyun cried and pounced to me, both of us were punished to stand outside in the walkway for the rest of the lesson. Now, we were having combat training as part of physical education.

"You are too loud over there! Do you want to be punished for this lesson too? Even if you memorized all the incantations, you shouldn't disturb the class. Both of you, deduct 20 points! This lesson is combat training. But today's training is a bit different... The two of you who have been glaring at each other all this while! I ask you

both, what is the most important thing if you want to survive a battle to the end?”

Hearing the question, Yunyun walked forward.

I could sense she was observing me.

“It’s comrades! If you have comrades, your survival rate will improve! Of course, this excludes the brainless comrades who don’t understand that certain things should not be made into a joke!”

...You, you dare...!

“Yes... then, next is Megumin! To survive a battle to the end, what is most needed?”

“It’s firepower! Super strong firepower that can blast away the lonely girls who keep bitching about comrades. Power! Overwhelming power! Instead of acting coy in order to gain friends or comrades, it’s better to be a solo wizard that stands up high!”

“Ugghhhh.....!”

Teary-eyed Yunyun glared at me.

The teacher considered our answers, nodding slightly.

“Teacher, how many points?” X2

“Both 3 points. Disappointing! I’m so disappointed in both of you! You two stand by the side and pay attention! ...Pui!”

This teacher actually spat saliva!

This teacher pissed me off, even more so than Yunyun.

The teacher ignored us, who were quivering out of dissatisfaction in the field.

“Arue! Surely you understand! You, who are different from those fake Crimson Magic Clansmen that have nothing but test results!”

Fake Crimson Magic Clansmen!

Yunyun and I straightened our backs, grinding our teeth.

Not long after being called by the teacher, Arue came forward.

She uncovered her eye patch—

“It is the opening speech before a battle. If the monologue is good, even if you only have a radish for a weapon and outnumbered a million to one, you will not perish. Conversely, no matter how powerful the demon king is, if he triggers flags such as ‘Let me show you what is it like to be in hell!’ or ‘Your chance of victory is 0.1%’, he will die easily.”

“100 points! You get a Skill Up Potion too! Have you all memorized the traditional Crimson Magic Clan’s ‘Collection of Famous Quotes That Will Keep You Alive’? Then, form up in pairs and practice it!”

Hearing the teacher’s instructions, all the students paired up.

But our class had 11 students.

Normally, I would skip physical education lesson, so the number would be just right. But I wasn’t in the mood to skip lesson today.

I stood up, and said to Yunyun who was sitting beside me.

“.....Yunyun, let’s form a pair. Funifura and Dodonko probably paired up already. Then, you would be extra, right?”

“.....Fine, Megumin. Let’s pair up, but don’t think things will be settled just by practicing speeches!”

It looked like we had the same idea.

“Teacher, I’m left out. Can I pair with Teacher?”

“Oh, no problem... Then, everyone start!”

—Among the classmates who made their self-introductions imposingly, only Yunyun and I silently opposed each other.

“Finally, it’s time to settle this. The diligent person will achieve victory in the end. I always believed this. Although I was born to a poor family, I advanced one step at a time..... so I won’t lose to someone born as the chief’s daughter who received elite education without effort! I will prove to you, victory depends not on natural

talent, but on diligence!”

“Although I have never defeated you... but, even if the chance of victory is really small... as long as it is not zero, I will never give up!”

Both parties announced their determination...

“.....” x2

Thereafter, we remained silent for a moment.

“.....What! You are too cunning to use such dialogue like you are the protagonist! It feels as if I’m going to lose! Didn’t you keep talking about comrades earlier? This is incompatible with what you just said!”

“Megumin too! Previously, you kept going on about firepower, then you should speak more like a villain! What’s this about being a diligent person? Megumin is the natural genius here! You even talked smack about my family background. Too cunning!”

Using the battle prologue as a mean to boost the chance of victory.

This traditional Crimson Magic Clan’s secret did not work against fellow clansmen...!

“Too troublesome! Since it is combat training lesson, we should let our fists do the talking! No need for verbal competition!”

Yunyun shouted, and took the initiative to attack!

To limit my movement, Yunyun rushed to kick my abdomen.

She accurately estimated our distance, and twisted her waist to.....

“Meow!”

Hearing the sound emitting from my abdomen, Yunyun stopped.

To be accurate, should it be abdomen or under the clothes?

Kuro who snuck into my clothes was lightly kicked by Yunyun, causing it to cry out.

“Ah.....Ah...”

Upon realizing the situation, Yunyun suddenly panicked.

“What happened to you? So panicky. If you are not attacking, I’m going to attack.”

“Wait, wait, hey, wait! Don’t put Kuro inside your clothes! I won’t be able to attack like this!”

I approached slowly, as Yunyun gradually backed off uneasily.

“Yunyun kept going on about comrades earlier. What is Yunyun going to do now? You see, comrades do not merely help, sometimes they can become a hostage, a liability! But I will use super strong firepower to destroy the enemy along with my comrades! If you can attack now, go right ahead! If you can ruthlessly kick the kitten that you named, then kick by all means!”

“You are too despicable!”

PART 13

After I achieved victory in the duel, we walked home together.

“Megumin, you have never seriously fought in our matches!”

“There’s no need to complain after a match. Yunyun is so resentful!”

I originally intended to go home alone, but Yunyun used the unsealing of the evil god’s tomb as an excuse to tag along. In the end, we were still bickering.

“Anyway, it is all because Yunyun refused to tell me about what you did with those two. This aroused my suspicion, making the problem bigger. Was it something shameful? Reveal a bit to me would be enough.”

“It’s, it’s nothing shameful! But no, they wanted me to keep it a secret, so I can’t tell anyone else! I must keep my friend’s secret!”

This girl was too naïve.

I was certain that Yunyun would be cheated by a useless guy in the

future.

Then I would have to protect her until then.

“.....Forget it. Yunyun, I don't want to say bad things about your friends, but those two do not have a good reputation. I'm not too clear about it, but at least be cautious.”

“Megumin is too suspicious. What kind of environment did you grow up in to become so suspicious?”

“Because my family has a lot of issues, I must be more suspicious of others. Livelihood is already so difficult. If I get cheated, the entire family would have to live in the streets. According to my sister, a shopkeeper recently praised the flawed magic items made by my father.”

“Uh, hm..... Even I will think that's a scam.....”

Yunyun tactfully admitted that my father's products were flawed, but this couldn't be helped.

For example, a magic scroll that would illuminate the surrounding once it was read.

It sounded like a convenient item, but you could not read the scroll in the dark. If there was a bit of light, then this scroll would be useless. He always created such unfathomable items.

Living by your hobby wasn't a bad thing, but at least solve the problem of life's necessities first.

.....Well, I, who decided to learn the useless Explosion magic, was in no position to criticize others.

Soon, we arrived at my home—

“.....I think there is no need to be troubled even if you have no friends. There might be someone who really understand Yunyun.”

I said to the dumbstruck Yunyun, deciding to return home...

In the end, I discovered a suspicious guy sneaking around before my house.

“Hey, Megumin, who is that!?”

The guy peeked through the window into the house.

He was my idle neighbor, the future successor of the shoe shop, Buzucoily.

If he needed to see me, he could have come directly without sneaking around.

“What are you doing?”

“Woah!? Ah, ahah, Megumin... Good, I waited for you a long time. Actually, I have something to discuss with you. But it’s too late today... Tomorrow is a holiday, so there should be no school, right? Tomorrow morning... If possible, Yunyun can come along too. This has to be discussed with young girls after all.”

Buzucoily said, as he scratched his head. Yunyun and I looked at each other—

“—I’m home.”

“Sis, welcome back!”

Komekko ran over.

“Hungry? I will cook something.”

I smiled and said, but Komekko shook her head.

“I’m not hungry. I ate a lot.”

.....Ate a lot?

There shouldn’t be any excess food in the house.

I entered the kitchen in wonder.

.....And I saw the large amount of food in the kitchen. I was dumbstruck.

“Where did these come from?”

Komekko answered seriously,

“Mine is the name of Komekko! Watching the house be my job. I’m Crimson Magic Clan’s Number One Femme Fatale little sister!”

She made a pose while saying.

This child would become a great person in the future.

INTERLUDE: SCENE 2

—Komekko and Lord Hoost—

“Oh, you are rather late today. Come, continue to solve the puzzle.”

As usual, Hoost was sitting before the Tomb of the Evil God.

“I thought there would be only one puzzle for the seal. To think that there are more... Hey, Komekko, the seal of Lady Wolbach must be released today. I will entrust this to you, Komekko.”

“Okay.”

I solved the puzzle earlier, and another more difficult puzzle appeared on the pedestal.

“Look, I brought a lot of delicious food today. Basically, I hunted the creatures outside the village and cooked them. I can’t enter the village to buy things, after all. So please bear with it.”

“.....(Inhales)”

“.....This must wait until the puzzle has been solved!? By the way, why do you come here? Where did your mother go? Don’t you have friends?”

“Mother is usually not at home. There is nobody in the village near my age, so I have no friends. Since I have no toys either, I come here to play.”

“.....I see. Well, until you release the seal, I will keep you company and chat with you. This new puzzle is more difficult, so it will probably take some time. Since the village is getting more vigilant, I cannot come every day. But if I come, I will definitely bring you some

food.”

Hoost said and looked at my hand...

“Not making progress?”

“Yes.”

Hoost looked at me, who was swallowing my saliva, and said.

“.....You want this?”

“.....Yes.”

So it discovered that I was stealing glances at the cooked meat. Hoost gave an evil smile.

“To a demon, a contract must absolutely be kept. I said this before, you must make progress in solving the puzzle to get the food.”

I stopped moving the puzzle pieces, and looked at Hoost.

“Hoost is so cool.”

“Even if you flatter me, I won’t give it to you.”

“.....I have not eaten any solid food for three days.”

“You ate the creature I hunted yesterday! It is useless even if you cry and beg me.”

“I’m the arch wizard who will eventually surpass my sister. You better not antagonize me...”

“Where did a little brat like you learn such speeches? A demon will not be threatened by you.”

Hoost said and laughed.

“.....I cannot think clearly because of my hunger, so please give me food. I beg you, Lord Hoost.”

“Sigh! Seriously, I can’t deal with you! Come, eat quickly, Komekko!”

Although the food Hoost hunted did not have any seasoning, it was

still tasty.

After I ate a huge piece of meat, it said.

“Well, we have distinguished who is the master, who is the slave. You are full now, so be a good girl and listen to Lord Hoost. Solve the seal’s puzzle.”

“.....I’m too full. I want to sleep.”

“You—! Don’t joke around! You were eating so vigorous, yet you can still shamelessly say that! Hey, hey, hey, Komekko!”

“Because I ate too much, I don’t have the drive to do things.”

“.....Plea-, please, be more driven, Lady Komekko.”

“Sigh! Seriously, I can’t deal with you!”

“Al-, although I said the same thing earlier, you shouldn’t copy other people’s speeches!”

Chapter 3

GUARDIANS OF CRIMSON MAGIC



PART 1

“Good morning, Megumin. Have you had breakfast already?”

“Good morning. Lately, my sister has received tributes from many people. The leftovers are enough to fill my stomach.”

“D-Don’t you have any pride as a person?”

Today was Crimson Magic Clan holiday, so there was no school.

It was a cloudy day.

To help Buzucoily with his problem, Yunyun and I met up early in the morning.

“Fufu, Megumin, look at this!”

Yunyun took something out happily.

It was some kind of chessboard game.

Apparently, it was quite popular in the imperial city.

“Why do you have this?”

“It is a gift from my uncle who went on a trip to the imperial city. He even said something unintelligible like, ‘This cannot be played alone, so with this, you definitely can...’ or something like that, I don’t really get what he meant though...”

.....It seemed like her uncle was worried about her too.

“I intended to bring it to school to play. Since Mr. Buzucoily isn’t here yet, should we have a game first?”

“.....I don’t mind. I won’t lose in a game based on one’s intellect.”

We played the chessboard game on the grass patch.

“Then, I will start first...!”

—Thirty minutes later.

“Ugh! H-Here! My ‘Sword Master’ advances to this square!”

“‘Arch Wizard’ teleports to this square.”

“Megumin, using teleport is too despicable! ...Uh, can we ban ‘Arch

Wizard'?"

"No. Look, while you are complaining about this and that, I'm already in Rīchi^[1]."

"Ah, wait, wait!"

—One hour later.

"Gre- Great. If this goes on, I can definitely can win...! Megumin, this is the end! Let 'Crusader' move to this square..."

"Explosion!"

"Ah! Megumin is too cunning. Flipping the chessboard is too sly!"

"But, this is in the rulebook. Look here, 'When the Arch Wizard is left in your own base..."

—Two hours later.

"Again! Megumin, please play with me one more time!"

"I will win, no matter how many times we play. Give it up... By the way, this game is very interesting. As the right of the winner, lend this to me for a few days."

"Ah!, Wait, wait! ...Also, the game rules are too strange! What's with the Explosion, and the teleport! Which brain-dead idiot came up with this type of rules!"

Yunyun, who was about to cry, flicked at the chess piece unhappily.

"Anyway, Buzucoily is so slow. What is he doing?"

".....Want to call him?"

As Yunyun suggested, we went to Buzucoily's house, which was nearby.

Buzucoily's house managed the village's best shoe shop.

Because there was only one shoe shop, so naturally it was the best.

As we entered the shop, we saw Buzucoily's father, who was the

shopkeeper.

“Sorry to disturb you, is Buzucoily around?”

“Oh, isn’t this Megumin? Welcome! My son is still sleeping.”

.....Hey.

“Sorry, can you wake him? He told us, ‘I wish to discuss something with cute, naïve Lolita like you... Haha...’.”

“That bastard!”

Buzucoily’s father rushed upstairs immediately.

“Hey! Although it is somewhat similar to what he said, there is a significant difference!”

“That NEET made an appointment with us and he is still sleeping, he must be punished.”

We heard a roar and a scream from the second floor. A while later, Buzucoily ran downstairs.

“Ugh! Megumin! You are too much! My father suddenly shouted, ‘You bastard Lolicon!’ and woke me up with a beating!”

“You are the one who approached us for a discussion, yet you were still sleeping after the meeting time. Hurry up, let’s go.”

“Ah, wait! Let me change my clothes!”

—Buzucoily changed his clothes, and we went out together to the village’s only coffee shop, which has a unique menu.

“Yunyun, order whatever you like to eat. Buzucoily will be treating, no need to hold back. I want a sundae with the highest amount of calories.”

“That should be my line! Anyway, I don’t have much money...”

“Hm, I’m very full, so a drink will do... Megumin, didn’t you say you ate a lot this morning?”

After ordering, we sat down and started listening to Buzucoily’s

troubles.

“Sorry for the bothering you today. What I want to discuss is... Actually, I... have someone I like.”

“Eeh!?”

“Aren’t you a NEET!?”

“This has nothing to do with being NEET! Even a NEET wants to sleep and eat too, so of course we can fall in love!”

Buzucoily protested, but we ignored him.

“Lo- Love topic! Megumin, this is a love topic!”

“I can’t believe someone will consult me with a bitter sweet topic of romance... Anyway, who is the target? Is it someone we know? No... don’t tell me it is one of us...”

“Hey, don’t say such impolite words. Consider your own age. I’m not a Lolicon... Stop, you two stop! I’m my fault, please don’t pour chilli sauce into my coffee!”

Buzucoily apologized quickly. His expression suddenly became serious.

“.....Well, the person I like is.....”

PART 2

—Possessing large amount of mana, Crimson Magic Clansmen usually engaged in magic-related work.

For example, magic item artisan, potion brewer and et cetera.

Apparently, Buzucoily’s love interest operated a divination shop. She liked to train, and would stay in the mountains to practice her sure kill moves during her free time. She was such a normal Crimson Magic Clansman that could be found anywhere.

We left the café and headed for her shop..

“To think that it is Socketto. You are just a NEET. Isn’t she too good for you?”

“What do you mean I am just a NEET? Can’t a NEET have great aspirations? Listen, Megumin, humans should have far-reaching ideals. It is the same with work. I don’t want to be a shoe-maker. I want to have a more respectable career...!”

“But if you wish to date a girl, it is best to find work first...”

We followed Buzucoily as he expounded his strange point of view, and discussed the matter involving Socketto.

“The other party is Socketto, the prettiest girl of Crimson Magic Clan. And this one is a NEET who has no virtue to speak of and is even too lazy to succeed his family business. He has no future... Buzucoily, we will play with you today, so why don’t you just give up?”

“Please don’t analyze so coldly! Maybe she is a weirdo who likes useless bums! Firstly, I must find out what kind of guy is her type.”

“It looks like you know very well that you are a bum. This gives me a favorable impression of you. Well, we are free anyway, so let’s just try our best.”

“Erm. If you know you are useless, why not work at being a responsible person? Although it is not a problem for us to ask her about her preferred type...”

Buzucoily walked quickly forward without looking back.

It looked like he wanted us to find out if Socketto has a boyfriend and what type of guys she would like.

This was the matter Buzucoily wanted to discuss with us.

“I feel that it is better for you to ask her about her preferred type directly. It would be easier to create a topic for conversation.”

“If I have such courage and social skills, I won’t be a NEET... Oh, it’s right ahead!”

Buzucoily made such hopeless statements confidently, and spied on Socketto's shop from behind a tree.

Socketto, the prettiest girl of Crimson Magic Clan, was sweeping the floor in front of her divination shop.

For a beauty like Socketto, even the scene of her doing such trivial things was like a fine painting.

"Socketto is beautiful as always... I wish I can become some rubbish to be at her feet, and let her sweep me up..."

"Isn't being a NEET close to being rubbish?"

"Meg- Megumin!"

We chatted and observed from a distance. Socketto stretched her back and returned to her shop.

At this moment, I had a flash of inspiration.

An inspired idea.

"Buzucoily! This is it!"

"What, what!? Transform into rubbish at her feet? No matter what, it is better to leave such strange 'play' after we started dating..."

"What idiotic thing are you saying! Not this! I have a good idea. Socketto's job is divination. Her divination is very accurate, so let her tell your fortune! Let her foretell Buzucoily's future lover!"

"Ah! This sounds good! It would be great if she herself appears in her vision! Saves the effort of confession. If successful, this would be awesome! But if some other girl appears in the vision, then it won't work no matter how much effort you put in..."

Compared to confession followed by an instant rejection, this would be less devastating.

After Buzucoily heard my suggestion.

"Don't underestimate a NEET. If I have the money, I would have patronized her shop every day."

“It looks like we can leave already.”

Buzucoily bowed his head and apologized as we prepared to go home.

But there was another problem.

“By the way, Miss Socketto went into her shop... Hey, if we go into her shop and ask her for her preferred type, isn't it somewhat sudden and rude...?”

We were basically strangers to Socketto. We couldn't ask such questions on the first encounter.

Buzucoily hugged his arms with a grave look.

“No other way. I need to acquire the money for divination...!”

PART 3

There were a lot of strong monsters near Home of the Crimson Magic.

For the average adventurer, they were impossible to defeat. Even fleeing successfully would be difficult. Such monsters yielded fur and organs which can be sold at a high price.

With these monsters as targets, we entered the forest next to the village.

“Megumin... Is this really okay...? Even with Buzucoily's company, if a large number of monsters attack at the same time...”

“No problem. This NEET is usually free, so he comes to this forest often to gain some allowance and experience points.”

“Stop it with the NEET this, NEET that, how irritating. Even NEET have human rights... But we haven't seen any monsters so far. It is probably because the people who were free in the village have already driven off the powerful monsters, so Megumin and the rest of you can have your field training... Oh, found one!”

Buzucoily, who was walking in front, lowered his voice.

Following his gaze, we saw a black creature digging for tree roots.

This One Strike Bear had powerful forelimbs that can decapitate a man with one strike.

“One Strike Bear. Its liver can be sold for a good price... Good.”

Buzucoily started casting, then...

“Light of Refraction.”

He activated the magic he just casted.

At the same time, Buzucoily vanished before us.

He probably used an invisibility magic that utilized light refraction.

Judging from the grass that were trampled, he was approaching while still invisible.

At this moment, the One Strike Bear stood up suddenly, and used its nose to sniff at the surrounding.

Then...

Looked towards us.

“Eh!?” x2

From our hiding place, our eyes met with those of the One Strike Bear. It roared excitedly as it found prey, and charged at us.

“Yunyun, I remember you got a dagger...! Take it out! My cool rival Yunyun, please fight for me!”

“Usually, you would merely patronize me. Don’t wait for times like this to treat me as a rival, okay!? A dagger like this won’t work against this kind of monster!”

We couldn’t run away even if we wanted to, since the One Strike Bear was too fast!

By the way, Buzucoily!

Where was Buzucoily?

“Where did that NEET go? Quickly defeat it!”

“Ahahah, don’t come here!”

Just as the One Strike Bear came near to us.

“Light of Saber!”

Buzucoily suddenly appeared out of nowhere, and slashed with his hand as he shouted.

A flash of light emitted from his hand.

The light passed through the One Strike Bear from behind.

From its shoulder to its belly, the light flashed past. The One Strike Bear took a few steps towards us, and fell apart in two pieces along the cut caused by the light.

“Phew... Normally, even if it smelled me, it would only look around and relax soon after... Are you two alright? My timing is perfect, right? If Socketto is in danger and I appeared just like this... Ouch! Hey, wait! Sorry, no, waiting for the perfect moment to debut should be the standard thing to do for the Crimson Magic Clan!”

Yunyun and I continually hit Buzucoily’s shoulders without saying a word.

“—Seriously, don’t joke around in such a dangerous place. If we don’t clean up the corpse immediately, other monsters will smell the blood and come over.”

After falling over, Buzucoily finally stood up, and swept away the dirt on his clothes.

“After making us angry, you are still shameless enough to say this? Quickly, retrieve the bear’s liver, and leave this place.”

When Crimson Magic Clansmen hunted in a group, they would intentionally leave the corpse to lure other monsters over.

But we only have this NEET as our fighting force.

“.....I say.”

Yunyun pulled on my clothes.

I looked towards her. Yunyun’s face was pale, and she was looking behind us.

Therefore...

“Ov- Over there...”

She shivered slightly, and pointed in a direction.

I had a very bad feeling about it, and turned to look...!

“Run! Buzucoily, forget the bear’s liver! The battle is lost!”

“Waaahhhh! Wait, wait for meeeee!”

“Gahhhhh!” x4

That was an entire sleuth^[W] of One Strike Bears, which were furious over the killing.

PART 4

“—Yunyun, it is almost noon. We should go back.”

“Yeah, then I’ll see you tomorrow in school.”

“Wait! Don’t abandon me, you two! Please...!”

After we escaped back to the village, we intended to go home, but Buzucoily shamelessly pestered us.

Because he lured away the entire sleuth of One Strike Bears, he was currently covered in mud.

He looked really dirty just like that, and he was even crying pathetically before us. Seeing a NEET who was older than us act like this, I couldn’t help feeling sorry for him...

“.....Sigh. I understand. As an adult, please don’t kneel before a student. We will keep you company for a little while more... But what

should we do? The plan to let her foretell Buzucoily's future lover is already..."

"By the way, why would One Strike Bears gather in groups? One Strike Bears are not social animals by nature..."

Buzucoily complained in despair.

"Father also mentioned that the situation in the forest is very strange recently. Maybe it is related to the appearance of those strange monsters?"

Yunyun raised the question, while she was deep in thought. But there was no way for us to know the answer.

"In any case, it will be pointless staying here. Let's go back to Socketto's shop."

—We walked towards her shop as I suggested...

".....There's a sign saying the shop is closed. Did Miss Socketto leave for somewhere?"

Yunyun said.

Buzucoily patted hard on our shoulders...

I KNOW ALL ABOUT SOKETTO, WE ARE REALLY CLOSE AFTER ALL. FIRSTLY, SOKETTO WILL WAKE UP AT 7AM, SUCH A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE. THEN, SHE WILL TOSS THE BED SHEET INTO THE LAUNDRY BASKET, AND PREPARE BREAKFAST. BUT SOKETTO EATS UDON NOODLES DAILY. HOW DEEP IS HER LOVE FOR UDON? SHE WILL BOIL THE WATER IN THE POT, AND BRUSH HER TEETH IN THE MEANTIME, SO EFFICIENT. HER FACE IS PRETTY, AND SHE IS SMART TOO. SOKETTO IS SO CLEVER. AFTER EATING THE NOODLES, SHE WILL WASH THE UTENSILS FOR BREAKFAST AND THE PREVIOUS NIGHT'S DINNER. SHE SOAKS THE CUTLERY USED THE PREVIOUS NIGHT IN WATER, SO CLEVER. SHE WILL MAKE A GOOD WIFE. SOKETTO WILL THEN TAKE A BATH. TO BATHE IN THE MORNING, SHE IS SO HYGIEINIC. SHE BATHES IN THE MORNING AND NIGHT, THAT'S WHY HER SKIN IS SO SMOOTH AND LOVELY. AFTER BATHING, SHE WILL PUT HER CLOTHES INTO THE LAUNDRY BASKET AND WASH THEM. THIS IS IT. THIS IS A SERIOUS PROBLEM. BECAUSE SHE WASHES HER CLOTHES IMMEDIATELY, IT IS TROUBLESOME FOR ME. NO, NOTHING TROUBLESOME. YEAH, REALLY, IT DOESN'T BOTHER ME, ACTUALLY... IT REALLY DOESN'T BOTHER ME. AFTER ALL, I DID NOT DO ANYTHING OBSCENE. AFTER WASHING HER CLOTHES, SHE WILL GO FOR A WALK. SOKETTO'S LIFESTYLE IS SO HEALTHY. AFTER A SHORT WALK, SHE WILL GO TO HER SHOP AS YOU HAVE ALREADY SEEN, SHE WILL CLEAN HER SHOP. SHE REALLY LOVES CLEANLINESS, AND SHE IS SO GOOD AT HOUSEWORK. AFTER CLEANING, SHE WILL ENTER AND STAY IN THE SHOP. IT MUST BE BORING TO STAY INSIDE THE SHOP. IF I HAVE THE MONEY, I WILL VISIT HER EVERY DAY. IF THERE ARE NO CUSTOMERS, SOKETTO WILL FEEL BORED AND GO OUTSIDE TO DO STRETCHING EXERCISES OR LOOK AROUND TO SEE IF ANYONE IS COMING. SHE LOOK SO CUTE. SHE'S NOT JUST PRETTY, BUT CUTE AS WELL. THIS IS DEFINITELY FOUL PLAY. SOKETTO IS SO CUTE. SHE WILL THEN CLOSE THE SHOP AND RUN OFF SOMEWHERE, JUST ABANDONING HER BUSINESS LIKE THAT. SHE IS SO FREE-SPIRITED, OR SHOULD I SAY, SHE IS FREEDOM EXEMPLIFIED. LOOK, I'M A NEET DEVOTED TO FREEDOM. IN THIS ASPECT, WE ARE COMPATIBLE. WELL, LET'S LEAVE IT HERE FOR NOW. IT SHOULD BE TWO HOURS BEFORE SOKETTO RETURNS. ALTHOUGH WAITING HERE IS FINE TOO ... WHAT SHOULD WE DO?



"I know all about Soksetto, we are really close after all. Firstly, Soksetto will wake up at 7am, such a healthy lifestyle. Then, she will toss the bed sheet into the laundry basket, and prepare breakfast. But Soksetto eats udon noodles daily. How deep is her love for udon? She will boil the water in the pot, and brush her teeth in the meantime, so efficient. Her face is pretty, and she is smart too. Soksetto is so clever. After eating the noodles, she will wash the utensils for breakfast and the previous night's dinner. She soaks the cutlery used the previous night in water, so clever. She will make a good wife. Soksetto will then take a bath. To bathe in the morning, she is so hygienic. She bathes in the morning and night, that's why her skin is so smooth and lovely. After bathing, she will put her clothes into the laundry basket and wash them. This is it. This is a serious problem. Because she washes her clothes immediately, it is troublesome for me. No, nothing troublesome. Yeah, really, It doesn't bother me, actually... It really doesn't bother me. After all, I did not do anything obscene. After washing her clothes, she will go for a walk. Soksetto's lifestyle is so healthy. After a short walk, she will go to her shop. As you have already seen, she will clean her shop. She really loves cleanliness, and she is so good at housework. After cleaning, she will enter and stay in the shop. It must be boring to

stay inside the shop. If I have the money, I will visit her every day. If there are no customers, Socketto will feel bored and go outside to do stretching exercises or look around to see if anyone is coming, she look so cute. She's not just pretty, but cute as well. This is definitely foul play. Socketto is so cute. She will then close the shop and run off somewhere, just abandoning her business like that. She is so free-spirited, or should I say, she is freedom exemplified. Look, I'm a NEET devoted to freedom. In this aspect, we are compatible. Well, let's leave it here for now. It should be two hours before Socketto returns. Although waiting here is fine too... what should we do?"

With his eyes sparkling, Buzucoily provided intensely detailed information.

".....It seems like you are always looking at her. So scary... How do you know so much details?"

"Basically, whenever I'm free, I will come here and investigate. And I'm not bragging when I say I'm the freest person in the village."

He really wasn't bragging.

Anyway...

"This, this must be what is known as a stalker."

"Hey, Yunyun, if you say that again, I won't forgive you even if you are the chief's daughter."

This man... It might be beneficial to society if we knocked him out and buried him alive.

"In any case, there's nothing we can do if Socketto is not here. So let's leave today..."

Yunyun nodded as well, affirming my suggestion.

"No matter. I know where she will be going."

Buzucoily said confidently.

"She's really here."

"Yes..."

I didn't know if we should be happy that we found her, or if we should hand Buzucoily over to the police for knowing so much details about her.

Led by Buzucoily, we harbored mixed feelings as we watched Socketto from a distance. She was picking items in a convenience store.

"How is it? I'm someone who can accomplish something if I set my mind on it. This degree of investigation is simple enough."

I already said this was not an investigation, but a stalking...

"...Anyway, she is outside the shop this time. Even if we go over to talk, it won't seem unnatural. Yunyun and I will nonchalantly ask her preferred type of guys. Go, Yunyun. Coordinate with me."

"I understand. Let's ask quickly and put this worrying matter to rest."

I brought along the weary Yunyun, and entered the convenience store where Socketto was.

"Hey, Yunyun, look. Isn't this cute?"

"Rea- Really cute! If you give this to your loved one, surely... Uh? You mean this? This wooden sword with the carvings of a dragon!?"

I started such a perfect opening, yet Yunyun spoiled the effect with her unnecessary additions.

(Yunyun, be serious and coordinate with my topic!)

(Bu- But, Megumin's taste is too weird! No matter what, I cannot accept this kind of thing!)

As we were whispering to each other, Socketto came beside me.

"Ah, so cute. The carved dragon is beautiful. If you hang it by the waist, it would match you if you wore it at your waist when you are out taking a stroll."

"Eh!?"

Hearing Socketto's words, Yunyun exclaimed loudly.

“Truly, this is a practical and cute high-quality item... By the way, I will like to nonchalantly ask, what do you like..... Yunyun, what are you doing!?”

Just as I was about to naturally ask Soksetto what she liked, Yunyun suddenly interrupted me by pulling my arm.

(You are being not natural at all! Besides, is my taste really weird!? As expected, the weird one is me!? I can't see what is so cute about this wooden sword!)



(Yunyun's taste has always been weird. You even gave my cat a weird name like 'Kuro'... Ahah!)

As we were arguing softly, Soketto bought her items and left the

shop.

“What were you doing? The initial development earlier wasn’t bad!”

“But! But!!”

Buzucoily came over to us, who were still arguing.

“Hey, you two, what are you doing! Socketto has already left!”

“Sigh. I was just one move short, because of the unexpected interference... Anyway, why would a dangerous person who hangs a dagger by her waist every day dislike a wooden sword?! Enough, how long are you going to grumble? We should be leaving!”

“Don’t compare my beautiful dagger to that kind of wooden sword!”

“The two of you. If you want to quarrel, do it later!”

—Socketto held the wooden sword dubbed previously as “very cute” in her hands, walking happily before us.

“.....For Socketto to walk and swing the wooden sword at the same time... This behavior is also very cute...”

“In the eye’s of others, she is probably just a dangerous person.”

I listened to their lightly-muttered argument, and observed Socketto, who was swinging the wooden sword back and forth in one hand.

We were using Buzucoily’s magic to follow her invisibly from behind.

“It looks like she really like that wooden sword. Ah, she is using that sword to slash at the leaves falling from the tree. Is she going to train?”

Unaware of us following behind, Socketto used the wooden sword to hit the tree branches, and even started kicking it to get the leaves to fall.

“I, I say, what do you like about Miss Socketto? For Mr. Buzucoily, is she still in your strike zone even as she is currently kicking the tree?”

“It’s her looks. I like Socketto’s face and body figure. If it’s a beauty,

even those actions can be considered as cute.”

Hearing Buzucoily speak without hesitation— or rather, without delusion, Yunyun had nothing more to say. I suddenly thought of an plan.

“Buzucoily. Why not pretend to walk by casually, and help her nonchalantly, how about that? You can use wind magic to blow the leaves down the tree and help her train.”

“This is it! You are truly Crimson Magic Clan’s top genius! Megumin’s intellect is so sharp!”

“Ah! I, I also thought of a way for Mr. Buzucoily to be popular with girls! For example, comb your messy hair after waking up, find a job or something...”

He did not listen to Yunyun, who was trying to compete with me again. Instead, he maintained his invisibility and moved close to Socketto.

Then...!

“Tornado!”

Socketto was blown off by Buzucoily’s tornado into the sky—

“Is that guy an idiot! That guy is an idiot!?”

“Let’s bury him. Bury this dead NEET and forget about it!”

After ensuring that Socketto was unharmed, we hurriedly left the scene, and strangled Buzucoily’s neck.

“Wait! Both of you, calm down! Also, be quiet! Or we’ll be discovered!”

After being blown into the sky, Socketto used her own wind magic to maintain her balance and return to the ground with some difficulty. The paleness of her face could be seen clearly even from a distance so far away.

She looked around with her bloodshot eyes, perhaps looking for the criminal who used the wind magic.

Buzucoily's magic imposed optical camouflage on our surroundings. As long as our actions are not too extreme, Soketto would not be able to find us.

At this moment, Yunyun tightly grabbed Buzucoily's chest, and interrogated him quietly.

"Don't you like Miss Soketto!? Then why did you use such deadly magic!?"

"No, no! Since I can only use advanced magic, I cannot weaken its effect...! Actually, I wanted to blow the leaves off at the start! But I realized that when the wind magic gets near her, her skirt will..."

"Let's bury him."

"Yes, bury him."

"Wait, wait! Please, listen to me!"

While we were still arguing, Soketto had already walked off with a vexed expression.

It looked like she gave up searching for the criminal.

"Yes... No matter what, it's good that she's not hurt. And... we also know what color she likes to wear. This is great."

Yunyun and I shouted together:

"Miss Soketto!" x2

"Hey, hey, Wait—!"

PART 5

—It was almost time for lunch.

I should go back early to have lunch with Komekko...

"Wait! Both of you, don't just abandon me like this!"

I would wash the dirty clothes that were piling up, then play with her

for a while...

"I'm begging you, don't ignore me! This is too much! I used so much effort to avoid discovery earlier! She nearly saw my face!"

Then, bathe with her, and wash that furball as well...

"I'm begging you! Pleassee!"

"You are so noisy! Can you not follow us? Or have you decided to include us in your stalking list!? You should give up while it is still early, and find an easier target!"

"As Megumin said, give up early... By the way, there is a kind of cute monster called Tranquility Girl near the Home of the Crimson Magic..."

"Why are you giving me such information? Are you asking me to make do with some monster!? You look so honest, I can't believe you said something so excessive!"

The stalker cried out loudly as we decided to go home once more.

—After shaking off Socketto's pursuit with some difficulty, Buzucoily had been pestering us ever since.

"...Seriously, it's useless no matter how much you beg. We are not as idle as you. Students are different from NEET our rest time is very important."

"Please make time for me! I will treat both of you to lunch!"

Buzucoily bowed his head and placed his hands together as if he was praying.

"We are not kids. We won't be taken in by such tricks, right, Megumin... Eh?"

Yunyun looked at me who had willingly left with Buzucoily, and cried out.

"We will fill our stomachs, while we plan our next move."

"Hey, Megumin, is this really okay!? ...I, I will help too, don't leave

me behind!”

—In the village’s only café.

“In any case, the main issue is creating an opportunity.”

I raised my index finger as I ate the mutton sandwich in large bites.

Buzucoily hungrily watched Yunyun and I ate our lunch.

This NEET spent almost his entire savings to treat us to a meal.

“Opportunity?” x2

“Exactly. Currently, you have no relationship whatsoever with Soketto, right? Therefore, Yunyun and I will be responsible for getting you to know her. Actually, the best way is to be a frequent customer at her shop. But this is impossible for someone with no income. So let us create the opportunity to meet.”

“I, I understand!”

“Hey, how to create that opportunity? Do you have a plan?”

Hearing Yunyun’s words, I finished up the fruit juice after the meal.

“Very simple. Firstly, Yunyun will wear a mask and attack Soketto with her dagger. Buzucoily will then coincidentally pass by...”

“It is decided then!”

“No! Do you have a hole in your brain!? Do you have a hole in your brain!?”

At this time, the coffee shop owner said to us, who were still arguing.

“Since the beginning, I keep hearing Soketto’s name. What do you want with her? She went into the forest with a wooden sword.”

“No, it’s nothing..... Forest?”

Hearing the shopkeeper’s words, Yunyun and I looked at each other.

Maybe he realized our intentions.

Buzucoily said with self-satisfaction—

"THE FOREST HUH. SOKETTO GOES INTO THE FOREST EVERY DAY. THAT IS PART OF HER DAILY SCHEDULE. SINCE SHE LIKES TRAINING, SHE WILL VISIT THE FOREST TO HUNT MONSTERS ALONE. SHE LIKES FIRE DRAKE, PARTICULARLY FREEZING THE FIRE DRAKE AND LAUGHING AS SHE STARED AT IT. SPEAKING OF WHICH, HER HOBBY IS VERY SIMILAR TO MINE. AS YOU KNOW, I AM A NEET AND HAVE A LOT OF TIME TO SPARE, THAT'S WHERE THE ICE COMES IN. I WILL FREEZE WATER INTO ICE AND WATCH THE ICE MELT TO IDLE AWAY THE ENTIRE DAY. I THINK THIS IS SIMILAR TO SOKETTO'S HOBBY, RIGHT? Hmm, IT'S NOT? SIGH, NEVER MIND, WHATEVER, ANYWAY, SOKETTO ENTERS THE FOREST DAILY TO TRAIN, AND HER COMBAT STYLE IS VERY ELEGANT. SHE SEEMS TO LIKE LIGHTNING MAGIC. THE LIGHTNING EFFECT IS VERY BEAUTIFUL AFTER ALL. I THINK IT MATCHES THE BEAUTIFUL SOKETTO VERY WELL. SORRY, I'M DERAILING THE TOPIC AGAIN. AND SO, IF SHE ENTERS THE FOREST AT THIS TIME, IT IS DEFINITELY FOR TRAINING. SHE SHOULD BE REACHING LEVEL 50 SOON, SO AMAZING, NOT MANY CRIMSON MAGIC CLANSMEN ARE AT LEVEL 50. SHE CAN BE CONSIDERED A FIRST RATE ADVENTURER. BEAUTIFUL, CUTE, AND POWERFUL, THAT'S FOUL PLAY, SOKETTO IS SO AMAZING. SOKETTO LOOKS SO PRETTY WHEN SHE FIGHTS. THE SOKETTO THAT FINISHED FIGHTING MAKES MY HEART SKIPS. HER SWEAT STICKS HER BEAUTIFUL BLACK HAIR TO HER FAIR CHEEKS AND THE NAPE OF HER NECK. THAT'S DEFINITELY FOUL PLAY, SOKETTO IS SO FOUL PLAY, SO HOW CAN I NOT BURN WITH DESIRE? I WISH SHE COULD TAKE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO THE END, REALLY. BUT FORGET IT, IT DOESN'T MATTER. NO, ACTUALLY IT MATTERS, BUT IT'S FINE NOW. IN ANY CASE, ENTERING THE FOREST AT THIS TIME MEANS SHE IS TRAINING. THERE IS NO MISTAKE. SHE SHOULD BE LAUGHING AND CHASING A ONE STRIKE BEAR, OR FREEZING A FIRE DRAKE'S FEET HAPPILY AND HAVING FUN RIGHT NOW. I WANT TO SEE, I REALLY WANT TO SEE, WHY DON'T WE GO AND TAKE A LOOK? YES, IT IS DECIDED THEN, LET'S GO. AND WE CAN ENJOY SOKETTO'S SMILE TOGETHER, IT'S SETTLED THEN. YES, LET'S DO IT!"



"The forest huh. Soketto goes into the forest every day. That is part of her daily schedule. Since she likes training, she will visit the forest to hunt monsters alone. She likes Fire Drake, particularly freezing the Fire Drake and laughing as she stared at it. Speaking of which, her hobby is very similar to mine. As you know, I am a NEET and have a lot of time to spare, that's where the ice comes in. I will freeze water into ice and watch the ice melt to idle away the entire day. I think this is similar to Soketto's hobby, right? Hmm, It's not? Sigh, never mind, whatever, Anyway, Soketto enters the forest daily to train, and her combat style is very elegant. She seems to like lightning magic. The lightning effect is very beautiful after all. I think it matches the beautiful Soketto very well. Sorry, I'm derailing the topic again. And so, If she enters the forest at this time, it is definitely for training. She should be reaching Level 50 soon, so amazing, not many Crimson Magic Clansmen are at Level 50. She can be considered a first rate adventurer. Beautiful, cute, and powerful, that's foul play, Soketto is so amazing. Soketto looks so pretty when she fights. The Soketto that finished fighting makes my heart skips. Her sweat sticks her beautiful black hair to her fair cheeks and the

nape of her neck. That's definitely foul play, Socketto is so foul play, so how can I not burn with desire? I wish she could take the responsibility to the end, really. But forget it, it doesn't matter. No, actually it matters, but it's fine now. In any case, entering the forest at this time means she is training. There is no mistake. She should be laughing and chasing a One Strike Bear, or freezing a Fire Drake's feet happily and having fun right now. I want to see, I really want to see, why don't we go and take a look? Yes, it is decided then, let's go. And we can enjoy Socketto's smile together, it's settled then. Yes, let's do it!"

"You are really scary. And instead of these dangerous personal data, the important thing now is...! When we entered the forest earlier, we were attacked by a sleuth of One Strike Bears, right? I heard the nature of the monsters are a bit strange lately. If Socketto enters the forest at this time..."

"Hey, hey, wait. Is this really okay!? Hey, since there are witness reports of strange monster attacks, why not ask the villagers to..."

Yunyun and I exchanged words. Buzucoily coughed softly, and stood up.

"We must go..."

Spoken like a male protagonist who knew that the heroine was in danger.

"Mr. Bu, Buzucoily...?"

Surprised, Yunyun looked at the serious-looking Buzucoily as he stood up.

"I will enter the forest immediately! I will find Socketto as soon as possible...!"

Hearing this, Yunyun's face suddenly seemed to glow.

"This, this is it! This is it! The Mr. Buzucoily from a moment ago... feels so very...!"

Yunyun clenched her fists and sighed sentimentally.

“Soketto could already be attacked by the sleuth of One Strike Bears...! If I made a dramatic entrance again, what would happen? If I saved Soketto from danger, I can reach my goal in one move!? ...? Yunyun, what did you want to say earlier?”

“No, I just felt that you deserve to be eaten by a One Strike Bear.”

PART 6

We entered the forest again, only to find it has changed completely.

“...What happened here? It seems like there was an abnormally intense fight.”

There were signs of combat at the forest entrance.

The nearby trees were all burnt, probably by the use of fire or lightning magic.

And, between the blackened trees, lay the smoking corpse of a One Strike Bear.

“The charred smell of the trees have not dispersed yet. It seems the magic user is still nearby.”

Buzucoily said after checking the combat scene. He raised his alertness and went forward.

“By the way, we can’t use magic yet, so aren’t we a liability? Why should we follow then? If a One Strike Bear appears, the only thing we can do is to scream and run away.”

“Yeah, to be honest, I really want to go home...”

“What are you saying? If it is only me, a conversation cannot be established even after meeting Soketto. To be honest, when faced with a woman of my age in the village, I have no confidence that I can start a conversation.”

“What’s the use of saying this in such a cocky manner? Yunyun, you tell him too... Yunyun?”

“!? Wha- What!?”

Yunyun was in shock after the topic of communication barrier was brought up. She suspiciously looked away.

.....So there was another person here with communication barriers.

—At this instant.

“.....Lightning magic?”

A flash of light descended from the sky to the ground not far from here.

“Lightning Strike!”

Following someone’s shout, a flash of light from the sky illuminated the trees. Lightning descended with a thunderous sound.

The One Strike Bear that was struck by the lightning fell over with black smoke rising from its head.

Perhaps due to the instinct of wild animals, the other One Strike Bears kept their distance and shivered in fear at the thunderous roar.

A woman with flaming crimson eyes stood in the midst of them.

Holding the wooden sword, red-eyed Soketto happily began casting her spell.

“Lightning Strike!”

This must be the magic that charred the trees earlier.

As Soketto’s voice rang out, light flashed from the sky, penetrating the head of the One Strike Bear which was paralyzed by fear.

At the time when the second bear was defeated, Buzucoily rushed forward.

His expression was different from his usual idle NEET look.

It was the look of a Crimson Magic Clansman, determined to protect his loved one.

Buzucoily's eyes glowed crimson, aggressively casting his spell and releasing vast amount of mana.

Thereafter, the One Strike Bears noticed the presence of new enemies, and started taking action.

At this moment, magic hit with accuracy.

"Hell fire, burn everything to ashes! Inferno!"

The highest level fire magic was unleashed at full power—!

.....even engulfing Socketto in its area of effect.

"Mi- Mis- Miss Socketto!"

"NEET, what are you doing! Quickly! Quickly rescue her...!?"

Forget the One Strike Bears, even the surrounding trees were engulfed in flames. And Socketto, with her entire body wrapped in a thin layer of water, slowly walked towards us out of the fire.

It looked like she managed to react at the last moment and used a defensive water magic on herself.

"Goo- Good to see her unharmed...!"

"Yeah! My heart nearly jumped out...! Buzucoily, douse the fire quickly! Or the entire forest will burn down!"

Hearing me, Buzucoily hurriedly used water magic to extinguish the flames.

Although he was an indecent NEET, he was still a Crimson Magic Clansman who could use advanced magic.

Buzucoily's full-power attack annihilated the entire sleuth of One Strike Bears.

Now, there were sparks everywhere. With her defensive water layer removed, Socketto looked at Buzucoily with moist eyes.

Was it because of battle? Or was there some other reason?

Socketto's cheeks flushed crimson. She seemed to be struggling to

decide what to say.

The nervous Buzucoily blushed, and glanced straight at Socketto.

But, this NEET who was somewhat cool earlier, failed at this crucial moment.

He was too nervous, unable to say anything.

“.....There’s something Buzucoily wanted to say to Socketto.”

“!?” x3

My words caused the other three people to suck in their breath.

Yunyun’s face flushed red, as she watched this development.

Buzucoily was very nervous, as if he was accusing me for saying unnecessary things.

Thereafter—

“As it happens, Buzucoily. I have something I want to say to you too.”

Socketto said something unexpected, surprising me, Yunyun, and even Buzucoily.

“This, this...! Don’t tell me, it is...!”

“Correct. My feelings must be the same as yours right now.”

Socketto smiled gently.

Seeing the smile of this beauty, Buzucoily’s face became red like a tomato.

Was it because he saved her life while she was in danger?

Was this the suspension bridge effect, which would make one fall in love with whoever was present in the moment of danger?

I felt it wasn’t fair for this NEET to win the heart of the village’s most beautiful woman. But after seeing red-faced Yunyun’s sparkling eyes, I felt it wasn’t that bad.

Buzucoily strengthened his resolve, clenched his fists, and said to Socketto—

“From the beginning, I, I...!”

“If you really hate me this much, just say it. As it happens, we are both in the forest now. I heard you were like me, often coming into the forest to train. Thus, you should be qualified to be my opponent... Come, let’s end this!”

.....

“Ah?” x3

Except for Socketto, the remaining three of us cried out in surprise.

“I don’t know why you hate me so much! Since long ago, you have been tailing me, but today is really something special! Never mind the tornado that nearly killed me in the village. This time, you even sneak attack me with hellfire, while I was preparing to kill those monsters! Eh, eh, you are quite capable. I have fought so many monsters, yet this is the first time I ended in such a plight!”

Socketto held her wooden sword, and made an ominous sound, “Kacha!”

“No, no, no, no! It isn’t like that! You are mistaken! That magic earlier was meant to rescue you from being surrounded by monsters...! I’m very sorry you were engulfed in it. I didn’t control it properly just now!”

Buzucoily’s face turned pale, and repeatedly shook his hands to explain. Socketto relaxed her grip on the wooden sword, and frowned.

“.....Then, what was the tornado earlier about? And you were invisible, right? Your identity was exposed long ago. After all, you are the only person to stalk me every day.”

“That, this...”

Buzucoily glanced at us. His eyes were begging for our assistance.

We pointed at Buzucoily together and said.

“He said he wanted to flip up your skirt.” X2

Soketto raised her wooden sword, and slashed at Buzucoily.

PART 7

In the shop where pale violet curtains hung on all sides, Soketto said in resignation.

“Sigh. Both of you have really been dragged into serious trouble. You must have been pestered by this pervert, and thus were forced to help him, right?”

After returning from the forest, we came to Soketto’s shop, and Buzucoily was bandaged.

“Hey, don’t call me a pervert. My motives are pure. This was simply a wizard’s pure desire for knowledge, wanting to find out what color the females of Crimson Magic Clan like... I’m very sorry. That really wasn’t my intention. Please put away the wooden sword.”

Buzucoily, who was being bandaged, hurriedly explained as Soketto’s hand reached towards the wooden sword set against the wall.

Buzucoily was in a horrible state after being subjected to the wooden sword. He was currently being bandaged by Yunyun.

Soketto looked at him, and sighed deeply.

“.....Seriously, if you wanted a divination so badly that you would hunt monsters in the forest to pay for the fee, you might as well come directly to me. At least, I can charge you cheaper for the first time.”

“Is that really okay!?”

—In the end, this cowardly NEET could not even say his real reason for entering the forest.

He only made up an excuse, “As I wanted my fortune told, I came to the forest to make some money.”

And even “coincidentally” encountered Socketto being surrounded by monsters, then “conveniently” used magic on her.

“I’ll ignore the tornado magic and nearly being burnt alive in the forest for now— But that was because you want to help me escape the encirclement of the monsters. Fine... What kind of divination do you desire? I’ll only do it once.”

Socketto took a crystal ball from within the room, and brought it before Buzucoily.

“I want to know, uh... my future girlfriend... no, wife... no, no, the person who will love me? ...Ah, who would she be?”

Buzucoily lost sight of his original intention in one moment.

“Basically, it is about your future lover. This crystal ball will show the woman who would very likely become your spouse. The future can be changed, so I cannot guarantee that this person will definitely... Oh, we should be seeing it soon...!”

Socketto’s crystal ball started to glow softly.

Finally, the glow faded...!

“.....I didn’t see anything.”

“Eh, ah!?”

Socketto was even more surprised now than when she was blown off by the tornado. She shook the crystal ball vigorously.

“Wait, wait a moment. I don’t know what’s going on. This shouldn’t be possible... Whoever it may be, he should at least have a prospective lover...!”

“You probably should keep such a hurtful revelation to yourself.”

Since the crystal ball showed nobody, then Buzucoily and Socketto could not possibly end up together.

Soketto looked at Buzucoily, who was about to cry, in pity.

“.....Uh, no problem. My divination is not 100% accurate... I divined the weather once when I was young, the prediction was cloudy weather for tomorrow, but it rained for about five minutes...”

“Please stop! I can’t make out whether you are trying to comfort me or brag about your predictive accuracy! What is this! It is worse than being rejected directly!”

Yunyun and I kept a distance from them, and discussed softly.

“This is too pitiful even for a NEET. If the crystal ball showed nothing, that means even the woman-shaped monster that Yunyun joked about, the Tranquility Girl, would not love him...”

“What should I do? I, I did not think my joke would be this excessive...”

“You two! I heard that! If you really have to say it, please do it quietly!”

—After Buzucoily nearly cried and left the shop.

“By the way, since I was busy with the divination earlier, I forgot about this— Leaving the two spells aside for now, why was he following me every day?”

“This... Please do not ask anymore. This is for Buzucoily’s sake.”

Hearing my reply, Soketto tilted her head in confusion.

She watched the silhouette of Buzucoily, who was dragging his feet back home in despair.

“Although he is a useless guy, but he seems quite interesting. How mysterious...”

Soketto said, as she tossed the crystal ball in her hand.

PART 8

On the road, after leaving Soketto’s shop.

“It still failed in the end. In any case, I think Mr. Buzucoily should find a job first...”

“They are incompatible to start with. After all, I have been Buzucoily’s neighbor since I was small, so I know him well. He is completely useless.”

Yunyun, who was walking beside me, turned around after hearing this.

“He is like Megumin’s older brother... Uh, uh, you two should be considered as childhood friends, right? Hey, Megumin, would you ever fall in love with Mr. Buzucoily?”

“Never.”

I retorted Yunyun immediately, as she entertained some foolish hope.

“Is, is that so... I have always been wondering. Does Megumin only desire food? Don’t you ever want to have a remarkable love affair?”

“I still have an onerous mission to complete. Now is not the time to be in heat.”

I replied bluntly, but Yunyun refused to stop pestering me.

“But, but, Megumin will become an adventurer one day. An adventurer would be a member of a party, eating and living together, helping each other out...”

“True. I heard that among adventurers, the chance of marrying a party member is rather high... but it probably won’t happen to me.”

“You sound so certain. Well, I can’t imagine a scene where Megumin embarrassingly sticks herself to a guy...”

As we spoke, we arrived at my house.

“In any case, if I fall in love... it would be with a cool hero who never gives up in the face of adversity.”

“I feel that Megumin will unexpectedly marry an ordinary person...”

After bidding Yunyun farewell, I entered the house.

“I’m home.”

“Welcome home, sis!”

Komekko ran over with Kuro in her arms.

Kuro appeared tired, allowing Komekko to carry it as she pleased. It must have gone through a lot during my time outside.

“Sis, let’s eat dinner! There’s a lot of delicious food!”

.....A lot of delicious food?

“Delicious food? What happened? You acquired food from someone else again?”

“Buzucoily brought them. He said when I grow up, I will definitely be a beauty, then I must go to his house...”

Before Komekko finished talking, I charged out of the house, heading to the shoe shop to beat someone up.

INTERLUDE: SCENE 3

—Crimson Magic Clan’s Number 1 Femme Fatale Little Sister—

The puzzle was solved on the second day.

“.....I hate those people from Crimson Magic Clan.”

“I also belong to Crimson Magic Clan.”

“Except for you.”

Hoost and I lay before the puzzle. We thought we would be done with it, but yet another different puzzle appeared on the third day.

“Ah, this won’t do. I can’t solve this. By the way, you probably can’t solve this puzzle either. Something of this level can’t possibly be solved by a kid.”

“Sis said that when someone dampens your enthusiasm, you must

keep moving forward.”

I lay on the ground, swinging my legs and working on the puzzle at the same time.

“Hey, you are being improper. Your feet are muddy. Sigh...”

Hoost cleared away the mud on my cloak, while I concentrated on the puzzle without concern.

“.....Hey, what is this, you are quite competent! There should be a solution in this way!? Uh, what’s wrong? Are you stuck somewhere?”

I put the half-done puzzle pieces on the ground, and closed my eyes. It had been going without a hitch so far.

“I’m tired of this.”

“I beg you, Komekko! You already came so far, don’t give up now! Do you want to eat something!? You must be hungry! I will bring some food immediately.”

Hearing this, I got up and continued solving the puzzle.

“Good, good! Maintain this attitude! I will be right back with some food!”

Hoost spread his wings and flew off.

“Ah! I want to go too! Bring me along!”

“Id- Idiot! I can’t bring a brat like you into the forest! A brat like you would be eaten by monsters in an instant!”

“I want to go! I want to go! Hoost is strong, so it’s okay!”

“Well, it’s true that I’m strong! After all, whenever I entered the forest, the other monsters would run away!”

“Lord Hoost is so cool!”

—In the end, Hoost was persuaded.

“—Ha... Ha...! You, you are messing around too much! Hey, you’re nearly falling off!”

“There’s a huge lizard over there! Hoost, that one! Catch that lizard!”

“Listen to me when I’m speaking!”

Hoost carried me into the forest in his arms.

“.....You see, it’s your fault, Komekko. It ran away because you shouted so loudly. Many monsters would run away after sniffing the scent of a greater demon like me. I frequently go into the forest in order to find food for you. There should be a bunch of monsters that escaped wandering around the entrance of the forest.”

“.....After I grow up and become strong, will I frighten away monsters too?”

“Who knows? No matter how strong you get, a little bean sprout like you will probably not scare away monsters! Hahahaha!”

Hoost laughed as he put me down. At this moment, there was movement in the trees before us.

“Oh, it still is coming over even after sensing my presence? This one must be pretty strong.”

“Hey, if I frighten off the monster here, does it mean I’m stronger than Hoost?”

“Hahaha! Oh, oh no, my belly hurts! Hahaha. Well, if this is true, you are really stronger than me. But, this forest is home to many frightening monsters... Once you see them, you better not pee your pants.”

“I don’t pee my pants! I will chase it off!”

Hearing this, Hoost laughed heartily.

“Oh, if you think you can do it, you should try it! If you can drive it away, I will call you Lady Komekko from now on!”

From among the rustling trees, a huge bear suddenly emerged.

“.....One Strike Bear. Even a sleuth of them. Dealing with this many is difficult indeed. No other choice. I’ll spare them this time...”

Hoost said and turned his back.

At this moment, I charged towards the bears.

“Ugh!!”

“Komekko!?”

—Hoost cried out and charged towards the bears.

Notes

1. リーチ is to declare a ready hand in Japanese Mahjon

Chapter 4

THE THING THAT SLEEPS IN THE HOME OF CRIMSON MAGIC



PART 1

The broken-hearted Buzucoily returned home and stayed there for

three days.

I thought there wouldn't be any other event besides this...

—Yunyun was a bit strange lately.

“Megumin, good morning. Come, take this.”

Yunyun handed me a meal box as I entered the classroom.

This was unexpected, so I did not know how to respond to her.

I held the meal box blankly, and forced myself to say something.

“What? Are you in love with me? This is too sudden a change. For you to behave like a loving wife, I feel...”

“What loving wife!? Hey, what are you saying!? I don't intend to challenge you today, I just want to give you the packed meal! In other words, ‘I gave you the packed meal already, so don't pester me anymore!’, understand?”

.....What?

“The manner you say this seems to suggest that I'm a despicable person who will cheat you of your packed meal by any means necessary if you don't give it to me.”

“Megumin is a despicable person— but since I bother you daily, it is not like I'm any better.”

Yunyun said bluntly. Just as I was considering how to deal with her, the homeroom teacher entered the classroom.

The noisy classroom quieted down. The homeroom teacher walked to the podium.

“Good morning. I heard that the monster from a few days ago, which was suspected to be the evil god's minion, appeared inside Home of the Crimson Magic. The current situation demands caution.”

Hearing this, the classroom got rowdy again.

Aside from monsters similar to One Strike Bears, normal monsters

would flee just by seeing the silhouette of a Crimson Magic Clansman.

It was definitely unnatural for monsters to enter the village.

“Therefore, even though preparation is not complete, we decided to summon more people and forcefully reform the seal. The ritual will last from tomorrow evening to the morning on the day after. If we fail, Home of the Crimson Magic will be swarmed by the evil god’s minions— Of course, we also have our own means to deal with that. Once the ritual starts, do not roam around, just stay at home.”

The usually frivolous homeroom teacher showed a rarely seen serious expression.

I never paid the homeroom teacher much attention before. Now, the homeroom teacher unexpectedly seemed quite mature.

“Okay. Firstly, I will announce the test results. By our customary rule, the top three students will receive Skill Up Potion! Come forward to receive it when your name is called! ...Third place, Nerimaki!”

I listened to the homeroom teacher and examined my Adventurer’s Card at the same time.

Eheheh..... just short of four points.

Another four points and I can learn the Explosion magic of my dreams.

“Second place, Arue!”

I listened to the homeroom teacher, while looking at my Adventurer’s Card with a grin.

.....Second place, Arue?

“First place, Megumin! Good job. Come, get your potion.”

I stood up after being called, and looked to the side.

I looked at Yunyun, who was clenching her fists and feeling a bit uneasy.

“The first lesson is about creating cool equipment— such as Arue’s eye patch. Such equipment enhances one’s personality and consumed 1 skill point. For example, fingerless gloves or handkerchief. Everyone must go to the handicraft room!”

After the homeroom teacher left the classroom, I showed off my new Skill Up Potion and pulled my chair next to Yunyun.

Yunyun avoided my gaze awkwardly. I did not say anything and merely dangled my potion before her.

“.....Hey, say something! If it carries on like this, the mood will be too heavy!”

As if she had enough, Yunyun slammed the table and stood up.

Then immediately sat back down in regret. Her anger dissipated faster than normal.

“.....Then I will say something. Yunyun’s merits are ‘good at cooking’, ‘excellent student’, and ‘no sense of presence’. Well then, what happened to you this time?”

“Hey, the last merit is a bit strange! I have no sense of presence!? Also, my merits can’t be so few!”

I raised the potion before Yunyun, who was blushing and unwilling let go of what I said.

“You said earlier that you do not want a match today, so what will you do now? I remember you said you need 3 more skill points to learn advanced magic. I’m short of 4 points... Is this really okay? You finally got ahead of me and can graduate before me. You don’t wish to be surpassed by me at the last moment right? Hey, hey, hey... What will you do now?”

Hearing my provocations, Yunyun looked at me with mixed feelings...

“I said earlier, today, uh, no need to have a match... You should drink the potion quickly.”

“...Really. It can’t be helped. Then, I will eat the packed meal as well?”

For some reasons, as Yunyun watched me drink the potion and eat my packed meal, she looked relieved.

—As expected, Yunyun was very strange lately.

PART 2

“Hey, have you heard? It was rumored that a hero candidate has arrived!”

The morning lessons ended and was followed by the noon break.

Funifura mentioned this rumor as she ate her packed meal on our desks.

Surrounded by powerful monsters, Home of the Crimson Magic was a remote and undeveloped place.

Why would a hero candidate come here?

Hero candidate was a collective term for the people who received special powers from the gods. They usually have strange names.

The rumor was that, besides their strange names, their personalities, behaviors, and nick names were also different from others.

“I know, I know! We met yesterday! He’s a handsome guy, supposedly here to recruit party members in order to defeat the demon king. They seem to be short of a powerful wizard! Ah, why did it have to happen now? If they come after I have learned magic, I will definitely follow him!”

Dodonko said, and sighed regretfully.

.....Hm. The hero candidate is a handsome guy.

I couldn’t use magic yet, so I could not join a party. But, as an arch wizard candidate, I would meet this hero candidate someday.

After all, the powerful tended to attract each other.

As the saying went, birds of a feather flock together.

Yunyun was curious. She asked Dodonko.

“The hero candidate... What is he like? Is he very strong?”

“He has two girls with him, and wields a powerful magic sword. He is good-looking. I heard his job is sword master? His name is... Mitsurugi, I think?”

A sword master with a powerful magic sword.

Many powerful monsters resided in the area around Home of the Crimson Magic.

He must really be strong to make his way here through the danger zone.

“I see. This man will probably hang around for some time, right? In that case, I will let him join me after I learn magic.”

Hearing what I said, Dodonko turned around.

“He said he is leaving today. If he can stay longer, I will definitely ask him to bring me along.”

That was regrettable.

As a hero candidate, he must be an excellent person, someone who could overcome all obstacles and make history.

I intended to become a wizard and join an adventuring party. In that case, a party with a hero candidate would be the best option.

A party led by the hero candidate, one that can confront obstacles directly, was full of righteousness, and was admired by everyone.

Finally, I would use my magic to wipe out the demon king's cadres—or whatever they may be—and leave my mark in history.

After defeating the demon king, I will become the new demon king: Megumin—!

“Megumin, are you listening to me?”

“I was thinking about something very important, so I wasn't listening.

What is it?”

Just as I was getting lost in my fantasy, Yunyun dragged me back to reality.

Funifura and Dodonko were chatting about a different topic now.

Yunyun periodically looked concerned about them, and said embarrassingly to me.

“Hey, Megumin, can you keep me company for a while after school? I have something to say to you...”

PART 3

Other than Yunyun’s failure to get third place for the test results, there was nothing strange today. After school was dismissed, Yunyun and I were on our way home.

Yunyun said she had something to tell me, yet she remained silent so far. Then, she finally said.

“.....Hey, Megumin, what kind of relationship are ‘friends’ exactly...?”

Hearing this unexpectedly serious topic, I stopped walking and put my hand to my face. I held my tears back.

“Hey, wait, wait, Megumin. What’s wrong with you!? Hey, hey! Did I say something to make you cry!? Tell me!”

“No. I knew Yunyun is terribly lonely, but I never thought it would be to the extent that you don’t even know what friends are...”

“I know! I know somewhat! Buying things together, playing together, etc.! —This isn’t what I was talking about!”

Yunyun retorted angrily, then calmed down instantly.

“Hey, Megumin. You always cheat me, but you never covet my wealth, right? —You merely put on an expression of wanting me to treat you, or spin around before me during lunchtime to subtly

suggest I share my meal with you.”

“Of course. Concerning this, I have a baseline! If I’m really hankering after your money, I won’t complain even if you want my physical body as a price.”

“I don’t want it. What kind of person do you take me for!? However, I also think that ‘friendship’ should not be controlled by money, but... I recently encountered similar issue... Funifura said her little brother was really sick...”

I did not know what the situation of Funifura’s family, but I heard she had a brother who was much younger than her, and she doted on him a lot.

“And then, she wanted to buy medicine, but didn’t have enough money. If I give them money at this time, will it be very impolite...? I feel that friends should help each other when they are in trouble, but will they hate me if I simply give them money...”

“.....Did Funifura ask you for money?”

Hearing this, Yunyun shook her hand hurriedly.

“Ah, no, no. I only heard them complaining about not having enough money to buy medicine. Dodonko said she wanted to support her. So I am thinking, if I should give some money...”

This child is as gullible as before.

I could somewhat comprehend the recent events now.

Those two somewhat disreputable persons suddenly became close to Yunyun. I always felt this was suspicious.

Dodonko intentionally said she wanted to help Funifura in front of Yunyun.

This was to create a mood that suggested, “This is what friends would do.”

Before approaching me, Yunyun probably already sensed that there was something wrong.

But, fearing being hated by her “friends”, lonely Yunyun was about to give in.

“If I’m in your position, I will render non-monetary aid. After all, I have no money.”

“.....Non-monetary aid?”

“Yes... For example, wear a mask and rob the medicine shop together with my friends.”

“Hey, giving them money is probably more appropriate than that!”

I shook my finger at Yunyun lightly.

“Friends do not merely give of themselves. A part of friendship involves experiencing difficulties together. Anyone can give of themselves, but it is not so simple to share pains with each other.”

“In other words, if Megumin is hungry, I should not give Megumin food, but rather starve together with her?”

“..... No, no, no. That’s a different matter... But I feel that if Yunyun can accept it, lending them money isn’t out of question. Friendship shouldn’t be bought with money, but friends should still help each other out with money. By the way, I’m super poor.”

“You just subtly hinted something, right! —Okay, I understand. I will do as I think is right.”

Yunyun smiled and said.

.....This kid was too honest, so it was easy to guess what she would do.

Even though she felt it was suspicious, she still decided that she could not ignore it.

She would probably give them money tomorrow morning or after school.

Technically, this had nothing to do with me, but tomorrow—

.....Our conversation ended, and we walked on silently. We met my

neighbor NEET, Buzucoily.

“Ah, Mr. Buzucoily, nice to meet you!”

“Ugh, Buzucoily, what are you doing here? I heard you stay home all this while after being rejected by Socketto.”

“Megumin! Shh!”

“No, your ‘Shh!’ is even more hurtful! Besides, I didn’t actually confess, so it should not be considered as being rejected.”

After saying such pathetic words, Buzucoily suddenly looked serious.

“I realize it now. The world is waiting for my power to awake. Now is not the time to be horny... Recently, there are eye witnesses that confirmed monsters are appearing within the village. These appear to be the evil god’s minions. I believed the village needs my power, so I took the initiative to come out for patrols.”

Simply put, this NEET wanted to get over his crushed love, so he came out for a walk since he had nothing to do.

“I heard about this. The idle NEET in the village have been organized to form a garrison or something.”

“Don’t call it garrison. We have a cool name. It is ‘Anti-Demon King Army Guerilla Unit’.”

The demon king army was too frightened to even come close to this village. How were they going to wage guerilla warfare?

But giving the garrison a cool and glorious name was typical of Crimson Magic Clan.

“I heard the adults in the village have problems dealing with this monster. Teacher also said they will forcefully reset the seal tomorrow. That’s too troublesome. Why not simply unseal the evil god and destroy him with the combined power of the village?”

Home of the Crimson Magic was the place where first-rate arch wizards congregated.

Even the nearby countries did not dare to interfere with this place.

If the Crimson Magic Clan worked together, it should be easy to defeat the evil god.

“No, someone suggested that too, but this evil god was brought here by our ancestors to be sealed.”

“Ahah!? I never heard of this before! Why was it like that!? Why did our ancestors do such troublesome and pointless work!”

Yunyun shouted, while Buzucoily looked uncertain.

“Of course, it was because sealing the evil god here sounded very cool? ...Anyway, everyone agreed to reset the seal. Actually, there are other dangerous things sealed in this place, such as ‘The Forbidden Weapon That Could Destroy the World’ and ‘The Nameless Goddess of Vengeance Who Lost Her Worshipers’.”

“Although hearing it hurts my stomach, I am a bit interested in the forbidden weapon. Well, it’s not like I don’t understand how the villagers feel.”

“You can understand!? By the way, I cannot understand any of you. Am I really the weirdo!? There is really something wrong with my perception!?”

“Indeed.” X2

“!?”

PART 4

—On the next day, I dragged the school bag containing Kuro to school. It was earlier than usual. As expected— I saw three familiar faces on the way to school.

“Thanks, Yunyun! This really helps! I will repay you!”

“It’s nothing, no need to thank me! Ah, then, want to go to school together...”

Those three were Funifura, Dodonko, and Yunyun.

Funifura smiled as she took something from Yunyun.

“Ah... So-, sorry. I must bring this money over immediately.”

“Ah, is, is that so... Sorry, I can’t read the mood... Then, let’s meet in school.”

Yunyun smiled and walked towards the school.

Not long after, the silhouette of her drooping her shoulders as she walked on filled the mood with sadness.

Funifura and Dodonko watched Yunyun leave, and said softly.

“My cons-, conscience...”

“Is hurting...”

“Eheheh... In that case, you shouldn’t have done that.”

“!?” X2

Hearing my voice behind them, both of them jumped in fright, and hurriedly turned around.

“Megumin!? Where did you come here!?”

“Ou-, our conversation with Yunyun... How much did you hear!?”

I said as I climbed out of the shrubbery where I was hiding.

“How much did I hear, huh...”

“I heard everything starting from you blackmailing Yunyun with ‘If you don’t want your shameful history to be exposed, obediently do kinky things with us.’”





"There was no blackmail! We didn't do it!"

"Why is it kinky things! You, what do you take us for!"

My skittish joke provoked their embarrassing retorts.

“Wait, uh... I only borrowed money from Yunyun. Actually, my little brother, bec....”

“Right, right. Funifura’s brother is sick, so she needed money to buy medicine. We don’t have enough money, so we let Yunyun chip in to help.”

“Ah, that was terrible... You really keep me at an arm’s length. Why didn’t you approach me?”

“Eh!?” X2

Surprised by my words, both of them shouted.

“What? Is it really so surprising for me to help people in need? Or are you two trying to provoke a fight?”

“No, no...! We don’t mean that, but, uh... Aren’t you very poor?”

“Right, right. Even if we are short of money, we can’t borrow from Megumin!”

“Die.”

I swung my school bag, ready to attack. Both of their faces turned pale from fright.

“Then, then how do you intend to help us?”

“Right, right. Even if we ask, could you really lend us money?”

“How could I possibly lend you money? What nonsense are you spouting? If you want to borrow money, you also need to find the right target.”

“You, you bitch...!!” X2

They glared at me angrily, as if their arteries were about to burst. But I wasn’t fooling around.

“Both of you calm down and listen. You wanted money in order to buy medicine. But acquiring medicine does not necessarily need money. Basically, it’s okay as long as you get the medicine, right?”

“Eh...! Uh, that’s true...”

“Do you have a way to acquire the medicine?”

I laughed confidently.

“Leave it to me, the number one genius of Crimson Magic Clan.”

Seeing my confidence, they looked at each other uneasily.

PART 5

Well, I made a promise, but how exactly was I to get the medicine?

Maybe I could bring Komekko to the medicine shop and subject the shopkeeper to her coyness.

Using my little sister’s Femme Fatale nature, it was possible to gain something out of nothing.

“Kuro! Kuro, pull yourself together! What happened!? Why are you completely limp!? Did Megumin swing her school bag around, forgetting that Kuro was inside!?”

I ignored Yunyun, who was hugging Kuro and making a scene. I concentrated on planning how to get the medicine.

Finally, the lazy homeroom teacher entered the classroom.

And took out the name list as usual...

“Ah, the ritual to reset the evil god’s seal will begin this evening. I mentioned this before, right? Let me clarify, failure is impossible. As an emergency counter-measure, I even prepared ‘that thing’ which I kept hidden for so long... Anyway, I rather not use ‘that thing’ if possible. Since the ritual success rate is more than 90%, I probably won’t have a chance to use it. It is best to resolve the situation like this...”

The homeroom teacher made a speech that would inevitably trigger a flag to guarantee failure.

The uneasiness suggested that the teacher probably wished the

ritual would fail.

Then “that thing”, which nobody bothered to ask about, could be used.

“Anyway, that is how it is. Go straight home after school today. Everyone must go home before evening. Next, the first lesson is magic item creation. Everyone go to the lab! Now!”

The homeroom teacher said and swiftly left the classroom. At this moment—

I suddenly had an epiphany. Magic item creation...!

—The lab was built underground, beneath the school.

Its purpose was to store dangerous reagents and various explosive items... not.

I heard the reason was “Wizards who conduct dubious experiments underground are cooler.”

The seating in the lab is random, but I always sit in the front row.

The homeroom teacher lazily walked to the podium.

“We will start magic item creation lesson. Creating magic potions and magic items are an important source of income for wizards. Mastering this skill is definitely without advantageous..... Megumin, it is good to be enthusiastic, but you don’t need to come so near.”

“Sorry. This is my favorite lesson.”

The homeroom teacher waved at me who was in front of the first row, signaling me to back off, and held up a potion bottle.

“We have done this many times before, but the basics must be properly reinforced. Today, we will create a simple healing potion... Yes, Megumin, why are you raising your hand? Do you have a question?”

“Forget such cheap potions. Teach me something more difficult that can earn lots of money.”

“Fine, you will be my assistant for this lesson. I will put you to work until you stop saying such foolish things.”

How unreasonable!

—As I worked as the assistant unwillingly, the homeroom teacher started the lesson.

“Everyone use your preferred ingredients to create a magic potion. If it is successful, you can try changing the formula. Different proportions of ingredients can affect the potency of the potion. Experiment and create your own unique formula.”

As an assistant, I handed out equipment and ingredients to my classmates. Then, I remembered my original plan.

“Teacher, I have a question. Can I create a potion to cure sickness?”

“A magic potion to cure sickness? It is possible, but such potions are rather difficult to make. Also, the cost of creating such potion is quite high, and it sells well. Basically, it does make good money.”

“I finally understand how teacher sees me. This isn’t for making money. Because someone is sick, I wanted to personally make some medicine to help.”

Hearing this, the homeroom teacher rubbed her chin and said.

“.....In that way, you may use any ingredient you wish. This is the formula for that potion. Take it... Anyway, it is surprising that Megumin who is covetous, selfish, and ruthless enough to kill monsters would have such a kind heart.”

“I really completely understand teacher’s impression of me.”

I silently swore that I will “repay” this teacher after graduation, and examined the formula. I collected the necessary ingredients for the potion.

Fire Drake’s liver, mandrake root, Onion Duck’s.....

“Hey, Megumin, what are you doing with these ingredients? What about the healing potion? Kuro is currently very weak. If possible,

make some for this little thing...”

Yunyun, who was next to me, said as she watched me gather the ingredients. She looked worried.

“This is a secret between me and my friend, so I cannot tell my rival Yunyun.”

“Ah! What, what is that about! Is this a revenge for what happened recently!?”

I ignored noisy Yunyun, and put the expensive ingredients into the mortar.

“Enough. Kuro will be saved by me instead...”

I turned and glanced at Yunyun. She put the unconscious Kuro on the table, and enthusiastically started to make a healing potion.

“My family’s education system is Spartan style. Don’t pamper my cat too much.”

“Putting it in a school bag and swing it around is not Spartan, it is torture! It is still only a kitten!? You should dote on it!”

Yunyun said in a fit of anger, gently stroking Kuro.

Although Yunyun was so worried, I did not think this cat would die so easily.

After all, it could climb onto another’s shoulder and frequently displayed an arrogant attitude. It was just a kitten, yet it was choosy about food.

It did not feel cat-like. Was it because it adapted to the rash living conditions of my family?

“Anyway, more action, less talk! Start making the potion! It’s time for me to show my special potion creation technique! Watch me annihilate the bastard known as ‘sickness’! Hahahaha...!”

“Meg-, Megumin. I don’t know what you are doing, but you aren’t making poison, right? You must be making a beneficial potion, right? I thought I heard dangerous words like ‘annihilate’!”

Yunyun remained uneasily next to me, as I started to make this difficult potion—

Firstly, grind the dried Fire Drake's liver into powder.

Next, use the mandrake root which possessed a strong life force...

“Ugh! Megumin's mortar is producing sparks! Hey, Megumin, what are you making!?”

“Ah! It is also burning here! Ahahah, fire! Teacher, teacher!”

“Create Water!”

I ignored the anguish cries of people around me and took the knife to cut the mandrake root...

“Hey, there are some mandrake roots running around! Who took out the mandrake roots!”

“.....!? Uh, the plant Megumin is cutting should be mandrake root... right...?”

I ignored the noise made by everyone around me, and cut the struggling mandrake root. I placed the root pieces into the crucible... but this was not enough.

I must capture those mandrake roots that escaped...

“Here, I caught one. I don't know what you are making, but it looks very interesting.”

Arue held the mandrake root tightly by its leaves, pressing on her eye patch with one hand. She smiled maliciously and handed the mandrake root to me.

“I'm making a high difficulty potion for curing sickness. Arue, are you done with your own potion? If you are so free, come and help me.”

“No problem. Okay, we must first cut this guy into pieces...”

“Listen, Arue. You must press it down like this, or this guy will struggle really hard! It is a plant monster after all, so there is no need to be merciful! How annoying, stop struggling! Be obedient and

let me cut you up!”

After Arue joined in, we continued the difficult work. Yunyun looked on with a pale expression.

“Wah.... Wahhhh.....”

Under Yunyun’s teary gaze, we were eventually done with the mandrake roots. Next, we finally started on the last ingredient.

A cute duck-like creature which constantly carried onions as a source of food— Onion Duck.

I needed the Onion Duck’s—!



“I won’t let you! I won’t let you continue this!”

Yunyun shouted suddenly and grabbed my hand from the side.

“What are you doing? Don’t interrupt my work.”

“But, but— this, this cute Onion Duck will.....!”

Yunyun shook her head vigorously, and said tearfully.

The surrounding students unwittingly looked at me with an expression of grief.

Even the bewildered Onion Duck tilted its head and looked at me with its big round eyes.

Yes, really very cute. Although it was very cute.....

“Megumin, this thing is cute, but it is still a monster. There are many monsters in this world that look harmless and are actually very scary. You should know of the Tranquility Girl monster near the village, right? The monster can trigger human’s sense of protectiveness, entice people not to abandon it, and finally starve themselves to death. No wonder how cute a monster is, one must not be merciful.”

“That is true! But, but!!”

Arue put her hand on Yunyun’s shoulder, who was still trying to argue. She said.

“Calm down. Megumin, which part of the Onion Duck do you need as ingredient? If it is the innards , then we just have to kill it. Otherwise...”

Hearing this, Yunyun timidly glanced at me.

I said to Yunyun.

“I need the Onion Duck’s onions... You can relax now, right?”

I said and smiled to help her relax.

Yunyun relaxed and exhaled, letting go of my hand.

“After all, onions have curative properties. There are many uses for onions. You can eat it, roll it up, and even poke it in. And the Onion Duck’s onions are the fighting onions, right?”

Arue said and retrieved a few onions from the Onion Duck.

I watched Arue cut the onions and said to Yunyun.

“Seriously... what kind of person do you think I am? I still have protective feelings towards cute creatures. If possible, I don’t want to kill either.”

“You-, you are right. Sorry, I misjudged you, Megumin! This is great... Because I heard killing an Onion Duck would yield a lot of experience points, and it can also be made into very delicious food...”

“.....”

A rare monster that gives a lot of experience points?

Very delicious food?

“I’m really sorry. After all, it can be used for making medicine, increasing experience points, as well as becoming a meal. So I thought Megumin would say ‘Truly killing three birds with one stone’ and then.....”

“Hand of Explosion!”

The Onion Duck suffocated and groaned miserably as I ruthlessly strangled its neck.

I examined my Adventurer’s Card and noticed that I gained two levels in an instant, as well as two skill points.

I flashed my Adventurer’s Card at the dumbstruck Yunyun in high spirits.

“Megumin leveled!”

“Megumin, you big idiot! Ahhhh!”

PART 6

After school.

“What is it, Onion Duck murderer? What do you want with me?”

“Megumin, you should apologize to Yunyun. The incident this morning deeply upset her. Even now, she is still crying about it.”

I asked Funifura and Dodonko to meet me behind the school. They said this upon arrival.

“Call me Onion Duck murderer again and I will beat you up. And the disturbance this morning that cast a shadow over our classmates, including Yunyun, was fundamentally because of you. Do you know how much I have done for you?”

Hearing my words, they looked at each other...

“Don’t tell me...”

“The potion you are holding is...”

“Yes. I made this potion for curing sickness.”

Both of them displayed a very disgusting expression.

“I know you are cautious, but this was made according to the teacher’s formula, so there should not any problem. I used a bit more ingredients, but this should make the potion more potent. Come, come, no need to polite.”

“Uh...”

Funifura took my potion unwillingly. She looked very uneasy.

“You won’t need to borrow Yunyun’s money now. Thus, hand over Yunyun’s money.”

“Eh! Wait, wait. We don’t know if this potion is really effective...!”

Without waiting for her to finish, I loudly interrupted.

“This has nothing to do with me. By the way, whether Funifura’s brother is really sick or not also has nothing to do with me.”

I said decisively, causing them to be silent.

“Uh... no, this...”

“No, no... He, he is sick! Funifura’s brother is really sick!”

Dodonko said loudly, defending the speechless Funifura.

But this was irrelevant to me.

“I’m talking about you manipulating the lonely and friend-less person’s conscience to scam money. That kid’s intelligence is second only to me. She is not an idiot. Even I think this event is suspicious. She definitely can sense it too.”

I said and moved forcefully towards them. They turned pale and said hurriedly.

“I know, I know! I will return the money! Hey, you-, your eyes are turning bright red!”

“Don’t be so serious. It-, it’s really scary!”

They begged for mercy as they handed over Yunyun’s money.

Ugh, so embarrassing. It looked like I was really very angry.

When a Crimson Magic Clansman became excited, their crimson eyes would glow.

With this incident, my image as an ice queen was ruined.

“.....So be it. I will hand this money back to Yunyun. If you get close to her because you really want to be her friends, then I guess it’s fine. But if you merely want to exploit her kindness and gullibility— I advise you not to do so. Or after I learn magic, you will become my first target.”

“I, I understand! You say that, yet your eyes are still bright red! How deeply do you like Yunyun!”

“We won’t bother both of you in the future. We won’t interfere. You two can be lovey-dovey...!”

Funifura and Dodonko said this anxiously...

“.....You must have misunderstood something. My relationship with Yunyun isn’t that good... And we are not really friends.”

“Fine, fine. No need to explain further.”

“Then again, for you to do so much for her. If this isn’t a friend, then what is it?”

Both of them impatiently fanned at their faces.

As if saying “Hot! Hot!”.

“If you ask me our relationship, it should be... purely, purely, rivals...”

“Fine, fine. Stop explaining. We understand. But to an onlooker, both of you are totally yuri^[W].”

“Megumin’s eyes are totally crimson. This really is Crimson Magic Clan’s natural weakness— we cannot lie under such condition.”

.....

“Okay, we will stop here for now. You should not be too conceited just because you are Number 1.”

“Right, right. While you are being intimate with each other, we may overtake you. If I become Number 1, maybe your loving wife will become my rival instead? So if you want to get intimate, do so now...”

I did not listen to their rumblings of defeat to the end. I simply pounced on them.

“Wait! Ahah! Don’t attack the magic potion that was so difficult to make! You are too cunning! Despicable! No, stop it...!”

“This person just can’t read the mood! That was just a speech to make our defeat look cool...! Ah, don’t...!”

PART 7

After defeating them successfully, I happily returned to the classroom, planning to retrieve my school bag and Kuro. At this time, only Yunyun remained in the classroom.

“.....What are you doing here alone?”

“What is this sarcastic remark!? I’m waiting for you! Where did you

go, abandoning Kuro here!?”

It looked like she wanted to go home with me.

“Nothing much. I had something to handle with Funifura.”

Unwittingly, going home together after school became our common practice. I thought of what Funifura last said.

.....Well, after all, the evil god’s minions were roaming in the village. We should temporarily end our rivalry.

Yes, we are not friends, but in this dangerous time, we should...

Yunyun still sounded angry, but she was also gratified. Probably because she was lonely after being here alone for too long.

“This is rare. Megumin actually had a matter to do with Funifura. Let’s go home. The teacher said the ritual to seal the evil god will start this evening, we should go quickly...”

“Here. This is for you.”

As Yunyun tidied her things in preparation to leave, I handed over the money I received from Funifura.

Yunyun held the small bag of money, looking perplexed.

My job was done here.

I took my school bag and tried to put Kuro inside, but for some reasons, Kuro was unwilling to enter the school bag.

It used its claws to cling to my shoulder, resisting vigorously.

“Hey, this money...”

“It’s from Funifura. The issue with her brother’s medicine was resolved, so she returned the money. Congratulations.”

I answered Yunyun as I struggled to remove Kuro’s claws from my shoulder.

This, this guy... resented the school bag this much...!

As I started a fierce battle with Kuro, Yunyun said.

“Hey, Megumin. Did you do something for Funifura’s brother? For example, making... a potion for curing sickness or something...”

She asked timidly.

See, Funifura and Dodonko? This kid’s intelligence was second only to me.

“As a realist, why would I do something that does not profit me?”

“When you put it like that, it is super convincing!”

.....

“Hey, why did you leave with a word!? I was waiting for you all this time, don’t leave me behind!”

—After leaving the school, the sun was already close to setting.

It was almost evening.

Yunyun hurriedly caught up from behind.

Since Kuro refused to enter the school bag, I left it on my shoulder and walked home.

“Hey, Megumin. You really did not do anything?”

“You are too suspicious. Even if I made a potion for Funifura’s brother, nobody will complain, right? Isn’t that great?”

“Then the disturbance that troubled everyone this morning was...?”

I chose to remain silent, quickening my pace. Yunyun hurriedly caught up again.

Then, she said to my side.

“.....Hey, Megumin. Want to go there for a stroll... No-, not to repay you, just a sudden impulse... Since I got the money back, let me treat you.”

I stole a glance at her. She was smiling happily.

.....My clever rival already had a general idea about what happened.

PART 8

“I said I will treat me. Ugh, yes, I really said I will treat you.”

We walked out of the shop, intending to go home.

Yunyun examined her money bag, and sighed deeply.

“Thanks for the treat. I have never ate so much in my life. It looks like I really cannot eat anymore today.”

“That’s great! Sigh, really...! Although I said you can order anything...!”

I listened to Yunyun’s complaints, while walking slowly on the road dyed red by the setting sun.

“Huu... It’s really agonizing to walk after eating too much. Want to rest for a bit first? Let me digest my food.”

“Seriously... Seriously...! Why did you insist on eating so much? How desperate were you...!”

I brought Yunyun, who was slightly angry and slightly resigned, to the park in the Home of the Crimson Magic.

It was called a park, but there was only a small pond, some benches, and a few small structures as shelters from the rain.

I took Kuro down from my shoulder and lay down on the bench.

“Meg-, Megumin! Your skirt has flipped— Your panties can be seen! Ah, really...! So uncaring. It isn’t like a girl...”

Yunyun meticulously arranged my skirt.

“Yunyun would make a good wife someday. After graduation, do you want to take care of me as your mistress? Even if you feed me plain rice daily, I will still say, ‘It’s delicious!’”

“N-, no! Why would I do that! You think I would be happy if you simply say my food is delicious!? ...Simply saying daily it’s delicious... daily... Ugh, ugh...”

Like a super loser, Yunyun started to be seriously troubled.

She was always like this. This was probably why Funifura said she was yuri.

“Speaking of graduation. What would Yunyun do after I graduate? I can graduate with just one more skill point.”

“Eh, why? Megumin, didn’t you say that you are still short of four points to learn magic? After getting the Skill Up Potion yesterday, you should be short of three points, just like me... Ahah!!”

Yunyun understood as she spoke.

“The Onion Duck in this morning! After killing the Onion Duck, your level...!”

“Yes, killing the Onion Duck increased my level by two. With the Skill Up Potion, I have gained three skill points. Just one more point to learn magic. I probably will graduate after the next test.”

Kuro climbed onto my belly as I lay on the bench.

This thing is too shameless.

—Yunyun said softly and tearfully.

“Wh-, why is it like this... cannot graduate together... I intentionally slow down to match Megumin’s pace...”

Yunyun said sadly—

—I jumped up from the bench.

I ignored Kuro who fell off my belly and interrogated Yunyun.

“What did you say? Did you adjust your skill points just to graduate together with me? So the previous test result was not an accident. You intentionally did not get into the top three, so as to avoid receiving the Skill Up Potion, right?”

“!?”

Yunyun shivered, “Oh no”— Her expression seemed to say.

There was no need for confession. This reaction was more than sufficient.

“Look at this silly thing you did! If you want to graduate with me, it could be achieved simply by refusing to learn magic after accumulating sufficient points! You do not know this trick, and yet won’t tell me that you want to graduate together. You secretly did this on your own— How clumsy are you!”

“Be-, because! Megumin, who was always ahead of me, suddenly fall behind! I always thought Megumin would graduate before me...!”

“Ah! You just said you have surpassed me!? Dream on! You never surpassed me! I’ll be honest with you. I don’t intend to learn advanced magic like the rest of you! I want to learn an overwhelming powerful magic that far surpasses advanced magic! Look at my Adventurer’s Card! I have more than enough points to learn advanced magic long ago!”

I excitedly stood up and flashed my Adventurer’s Card in front of Yunyun’s face. Yunyun stared at my card, as if she wanted to swallow it whole.

“Re-, really like this...! What, Megumin is better than me as expected...!”

“Uh... Hm, right. I’m really good. So don’t think you can easily surpass me.”

Yunyun smiled really happily. I did not know how to respond to this reaction.

As expected, she wished her rival to be better.

“Th-, then, I’m sorry I intentionally shaved my points. By the way, a magic more powerful than advanced magic... are you going to learn Blast magic? Or is it Detonation magic...”

“Explosion magic.”

.....Hearing this, Yunyun suddenly became silent.

“Uh, you just said, what? I thought I heard ‘Explosion magic’.....”

“Correct, it is Explosion magic. It is the one known as the most powerful magic.”

After Yunyun spent another moment in silence—

“What are you talking about! Explosion magic, as in really that Explosion magic? The Explosion magic that is considered useless? The one that requires the most skill points out of all the skills in all the jobs. Even if it is learned, most people cannot activate it due to insufficient mana. Even if it is activated, the caster would be unable to move due to mana exhaustion.....”

“Yes, that Explosion magic.”

I nodded vigorously. Yunyun sucked in a deep breath and—

“Are you stupid!? What are you saying, Megumin! What are you going to do with that!? That magic basically cannot be activated by anyone. Even if activated forcefully, it is only possible once per day. That is a faulty magic with harsh requirements and impractical usage! What are you thinking? The difference between a genius and an idiot is just one step apart. Megumin, if you persists like this, you will become an idiot, okay?”

“Ev-, even if it is Yunyun, I won’t accept being called an idiot. Or I will make you suffer! ...Anyway, I understand everything you said so far. I researched Explosion magic thoroughly. I dare say that I’m the one who understands Explosion magic best in this entire village.”

“If you understand it so well, why do you still want to learn it!? If it is Megumin... You can definitely learn a lot of advanced magic, accumulate a lot of experience, and finally become an arch wizard who make her mark in history...! Hey, what exactly is the reason!?”

I could not understand why Yunyun was shouting so agitatedly. This was my personal decision.

“Obviously, that is because I love Explosion magic.”

I gave the most honest answer.

Yunyun thought I had more complicated reasons. Hearing my answer, she widened her eyes.

“.....As expected, Megumin is not a genius, but an idiot.”

“I just warned you not to call me an idiot!”

After saying this, I pounced on Yunyun.

PART 9

“Ha... Ha...! I won...! My first victory over Megumin...!”

Yunyun was overjoyed. Her face was flushed red.

Dam-, damn it...! My first loss to Yunyun.

“Well, I did not fully expert my power just now. I cannot do so until there is a full moon.”

“That’s impossible since you are not a demon! Just admit defeat!”

I fought with Yunyun in the empty park for a while. Eventually, I was pressed down by Yunyun.

My hot sweaty body was pressed down on the cool floor. It felt very comfortable.

The sun had almost set, so the surrounding darkened. Both of us were panting in the park.

In a moment of impulse, I engaged her in melee combat, in which I was disadvantaged.

“Sigh... I will admit defeat. Let go of me. I admit defeat. I lost, okay?”

So Yunyun obediently released me.

“.....Hu. I admit defeat. Sigh. After eating so much food, it’s almost natural to lose. Thinking about it, I did not even exert half of my true

strength.”

“Ahah! It’s too cunning to make excuses after I released you!”

I said to Yunyun as I cleaned the dirt off my knees.

“It’s great for you to win once before I go on my journey. Yunyun will succeed as the chief of Crimson Magic Clan one day. During my tour of the world to become an arch wizard, it will enough if you can become the next chief and spend your whole life peacefully in the Home of the Crimson Magic.”

“Can’t you praise me for winning just this once!? You are saying such sour words because you are just unhappy about losing! ...And, you... after graduating, intend to travel?”

I carried Kuro who ran over to my feet, then said to Yunyun, who was feeling uneasy.

“Correct. I intend to travel. Actually, there is a reason why I love Explosion magic. I will reveal this reason only to you.”

Kuro held firmly onto my cloak at my shoulder, maybe he really liked this spot. I patted its head and told Yunyun what I did not even tell my parents.

“When I was small, I was attacked by a monster. There was a big sister, a wizard passing by, who used Explosion magic to defeat the monster. The devastation caused by the Explosion magic then was so great. It was an overwhelming power, an absolute force. It was really so awesome that it deserved to be called the most powerful magic. When you have seen it once, you won’t be interested in other magic.”

I cannot remember the cloaked sister’s voice and aura clearly anymore, but the scene of Explosion magic was deeply engraved in my mind.

Whenever I remembered it, I felt my chest getting hot and painful.

I wasn’t interested in gossip like Funifura and Dodonko. I did not have a great ambition like Yunyun, who was working hard to become

the next chief.

I only wanted to meet that cloaked sister again and showed her my Explosion magic.

To meet her again and thank her... And ask her—

—My Explosion magic which I learned from you... How was it?

After hearing my only dream, Yunyun did not seem dissatisfied as before, but had a clear, understanding expression. She sighed.

“Since there is such a reason, there’s nothing more for me to say. But life as an Explosion-using wizard would be really difficult. With Megumin’s mana, you may be able to activate it, but after that, you would be helpless due to mana exhaustion. Going on a journey is great, but if you are alone, wouldn’t you be attacked by other monsters after you are unable to move? Do you have a way to find travelling companions?”

“I am like Yunyun who have no friend. What can I do?”

“Why are you saying such things so boldly!? Hey, even if you are going on a journey, it won’t be immediately after learning magic, right? You would still be staying in the village for a while?”

“Hm, yes. I can’t just abandon my sister. I will train my level near the village. After some time, I will leave the village when my preparations are done.”

Yunyun relaxed.

“Yunyun will be staying to succeed as chief, right? After all, the chief of Crimson Magic Clan is hereditary.”

“Yes. I felt I will succeed as chief, but I must accumulate various experiences before that. Currently, I am being taken care of by Megumin, but one day, I.....”

At the moment when Yunyun was about continue, Kuro who was sprawled on my shoulder suddenly reacted to a small noise.

It was the sound of paddling in the water.

I turned and looked—

“Ah, this is rare! A wild Onion Duck! To think it would appear inside the village...!”

An Onion Duck was paddling in the pond of the park, coming towards us.

It was delicious, yet for an unknown reason, it was never attacked by other monsters. This was an unique attribute of the Onion Duck.

A certain monster biologist once said that its cute appearance aroused the protectiveness of other monsters.

The Onion Duck left the pond and walked towards us in swaying steps.

To avoid scaring off the duck, Yunyun squatted down slowly. She looked at it gently, and continued the conversation.

“.....Up to now, Megumin has been taking care of me, but one day I will become the village’s most powerful wizard and be capable of protecting delicate life forms like the Onion Duck.....”

“Gah!”

I did not intend to let the Onion Duck escape. Without waiting for Yunyun to finish, I strangled the Onion Duck’s neck.

I held up the limp Onion Duck’s neck.

“Megumin, dinner. GET ☆ DAZE!”

“Megumin, you big idiot ahhhh!”

Yunyun cried and pounced on me.

—Round Two!

PART 10

“.....Really, it’s all Yunyun’s fault. The sky is almost completely dark now.”

“Me!? It’s my fault!? Why is it that Megumin can ruthlessly kill such adorable creatures? Although Megumin can do anything, it is still too brutal! Can’t you have a bit of compassion!”

Yunyun walked angrily ahead by herself.

After that, because of the second round, the surrounding became dark.

The magic lamps around the village lit up, illuminating the road as if it was daytime.

“Today is basically one victory and one loss. In other words, a draw. We’ll count it as nothing ever happened. You don’t mind, right?”

“Of, of course I do! It is a fact that I won once!? As the perpetual loser, it doesn’t matter if I lose again. But this cannot be considered a draw or cancelled. One victory and one loss, that’s it! Eh, eh. I must write in my diary— Today, I won Megumin.”

“Also write down that you were pressed down helplessly on the ground by me after that.”

“I won’t admit that! And you shouldn’t always use Kuro as a shield! ...Why is it so close to you, even though you keep abusing it?”

Perplexed, Yunyun turned to look at Kuro, who merely sprawled on my shoulder and sneezed.

It really was a strange cat.

Under normal circumstances, after being subject to so many abuses, it would not be unusual for it to run away or be angry.

I happily took the Onion Duck as my victory prize, and hurried home.

Although I was full after Yunyun’s treat, my little sister was still starving.

I must hurry home and cook this duck for her to eat.

Yunyun stared straight at me, who was humming a song while holding onto the duck.

“Is Megumin really a girl? Where are your gentleness, consideration, and looks?”

“Is Yunyun really the chief’s daughter? Where is your noble taste of Crimson Magic Clan?”

After a while, both of us silently stopped and smiled maliciously at each other.

Today’s result was one victory and one loss.

Why not let’s settle it now— But Yunyun suddenly turned away.

“Sigh... Seriously. Why is every day like this when I’m with Megumin?”

“That’s my line. Why do you find fault with me every day?”

“Uh... This, this...”

Yunyun tried to gloss it over by walking on ahead, ignoring me, who was smiling and coming closer.

I continued to smile maliciously as I followed behind Yunyun.

“...How annoying! To think I finally achieved a beautiful victory today! Is Megumin uncomfortable if you don’t do this daily? When you join a party in the future, you will surely trouble others!”

“What are you saying? After I learned Explosion magic, I will be the party’s strong damage dealer. The demon king’s cadres won’t even be my match. With a rare genius of the Crimson Magic Clan like me, the party will be famous worldwide. It will be an elite party full of advanced jobs...!”

I shared with Yunyun my imagined future. At this moment—

—Dang, dang, dang. Sharp noises echoed through the Home of the Crimson Magic.

I remembered this bell towed only for emergency situations.

What happened? —I turned back to look.....

A countless number of flying monsters in the dark sky entered my vision.

They seemed to be searching for something, dispersing and looking everywhere...!

“Meg-... Meg-, Megumin! That! Isn’t that—!”

“Ca-, ca-, calm down, Yunyun. The homeroom teacher said they will forcefully seal the evil god! And that irresponsible homeroom teacher also said that even if it fails, there is still ‘that thing’ to use! Therefore, this matter will be resolved quickly!”

Or rather, the homeroom teacher was hoping for the seal to fail.

So there should be nothing to worry about.

I even thought that the homeroom teacher would mess up the sealing ritual on purpose.

Kuro, who was lying on my shoulder, hid itself into the school bag, which he refused to enter previously.

Although it was a rude kitten, it would still be afraid of monsters.

“Hey... Meg- Megumin!”

I closed my school bag over Kuro. At this time, Yunyun pulled on my sleeves.

She looked at the sky with a pale expression.

“Did... did you notice they are flying towards us?”

She pointed at the monsters flying towards us.

“We are running! My home is closest from here! Yunyun, if something happens to me, don’t bother with me. And don’t look back. I’ll leave this place to you, I’m leaving now!”

After Yunyun heard this...!

“Id- idiot! What are you saying! How can I abandon Megumin an-... and... Eh, uh? What did you just say!? Hey, what did you just say!?”

Yunyun, who noticed my attempt to gloss things over, protested angrily and nearly cried.

I ignored her words, turned to look, and discovered that the monsters were closing in on us.

“Yu-, Yunyun! How many skill points do you have!? You still don’t have enough to learn advanced magic!?”

“Of course not! If Megumin give up on Explosion magic and learn advanced magic, these monsters won’t stand a chance! Hey, just do it!”

Yunyun cried out. But this was the only thing I would not compromise.

The reason I worked so hard until now was to learn Explosion magic.

“We are finished, they caught up...! ...Eh?”

“.....It looks like they merely flew pass.”

Some monsters ignored us and flew off somewhere.

I exhaled in relief, turning to look at where the bell was towing.

Between each bell tow, white light flashed across the dark sky.

Surely it was the adults in the village who found an opportunity to vent and unleash their power.

The monsters should be suppressed by them soon, but we should still hurried home.

“Yunyun, come to my home. Stay over for tonight.”

“Eh!? Sta-, stay over at your house? Is that really okay!?”

“No problem. Anyway, there are monsters about, do you intend to go home alone? You can wear my pajamas, but if you dare to complain about the chest area being too tight or size is too small, I will let you sleep naked.”

“I, I won’t say that! I can endure such trivial things!”

Yunyun did not deny that the clothes might be too small or chest area too tight.

Although I very wanted to start Round Three, now was really not the time.

“My house is just ahead, let’s hurry. Only my sister will be home today. Even if she is hungry, she will obediently watch the house with the door and windows closed. Although it’s a small and broken house, if the windows and door are closed properly, even those monsters won’t—“

Get in— I wanted to say.

—And I saw the completely ruined front door.

I dropped the school bag in my hand, and said softly.

“.....Komekko?”

INTERLUDE: SCENE 4

—Oyakodon^[1] For the Femme Fatale little Sister!—

“Sigh. Finally solved that puzzle, and another one appeared again, Komekko.”

“I can’t read the words on them. Lord Hoost, please read.”

.....

“Better not call me Lord Hoost. I will call you Komekko directly too.”

“Okay.”

After both agreed, Hoost read the words that appeared on the tombstone.

“‘Ye who desire to break the seal, present thy oblation of a female bird and its child. Offer thy oblation and pray.....’ I can’t read the last part. Basically, need to present an offering. Female bird and

child, huh. The offering to break the seal should be more formal. But it is difficult to find such creatures in this forest...”

Annoyed, Hoost smacked his fist on his palm.

“Right! Hey, Komekko, I will give you money. Go into the village and buy a female bird and its child. Make sure it is of high quality!”

“I understand!”

I took Hoost’s money and returned to the village.

—One hour later.

“I’m back! I bought it!”

“Oh, well done, give you a bit of... uh, what is this?”

I was holding a bowl carefully in both hands, so as to not spill it. Hoost tilted its head and looked at me in confusion.

I put the bowl respectfully on the altar.

“This is the offering, okyakodon.”

“Are you an idiot!”

Hoost opened the cover of the bowl and looked inside...

“Oh... You are right. It is indeed in line with the tombstone text. It’s a female bird and child. But I have never heard of okyakodon being able to break seals. I thought I would be able to see Lady Wolbach’s other half.....”

“Who is Lady Wolbach?”

“Uh? Lady Wolbach’s true form is a huge black monster. You will pee your pants when you see it! ...Seriously, it looks like I must prepare the offering myself. No other choice. I feel this offering will be problematic, it will take some time.....”

Hoost said and spread its wings.

Then, Hoost turned around suddenly to ask me.

“.....This is how it is. It may be some time before we meet again. When I return, I will play with you again. Don’t tell anyone about me, okay? ...You can eat that okyakodon. Bye bye.”

After saying that, he finally flew away.

—Some time later.

I sat on the altar, eating the okyakodon. At this time.

“?”

Suddenly, I heard a noise from the bushes, so I turned to look.

In the end, a black beast emerged from the bushes.

.....Its body was really small.

The beast slowly moved to my side as I recovered from surprise and hurriedly ate the okyakodon.

It looked like it wanted to eat my okyakodon.

It seemed to be asserting that this bowl of rice belonged to him. But no, this was something Hoost gave me.

I stood up to eat the okyakodon. The black beast suddenly attacked me.

—Although it kept running between my legs and struggled for a long time, after a long battle, it finally gave up and no longer moved.

Even when I carried it and bit its head a few times, the beast did not move.

I won—!

After the fierce battle, I carried my battle prize home.

Notes

1. Rice with chicken meat and egg. See [Wikipedia](#)

Chapter 5

PRELUDE OF THE EXPLOSION MANIAC



PART 1

In my narrow and run-down house, there was a sound of someone

searching the house violently.

That was to say that, someone was ransacking the house.

As to what that someone was, naturally it was a monster.

And inside the house should also be—

“Ko-Ko-... Komekko... Komekko has been—“

“Meg-Megumin, calm down! Ca-ca-calm down!”

Yunyun grabbed and shook my shoulder, as I stood unsteadily before the ruined door.

“.....Komekko!!”

“Calm down! Megumin, just calm down!!”

Yunyun’s words snapped me out of my trance. My brain started churning rapidly.

True, I must think calmly in a time like this.

“No problem! My sister is the reincarnation of the god of gluttony, Ashtoreth! When she is in danger, her seal will be broken, and she will finally conquer the world with me.”

“I’m asking you to calm down! Pull yourself together, Megumin!”

“Slap!”

After being slapped by Yunyun, I regained my composure.

“Pain, pain, pain... No-Now isn’t the time to say such things, Yunyun! Komekko should still be in the house! We should infiltrate into the house and rescue her! That child is more well-versed in the ways of the world than me, so she won’t be eaten by monsters so easily! Come, stop dawdling, let’s go!”

“...Ho-How can she suddenly become so positive...”

Yunyun followed behind and drew her dagger from her waist as she muttered. The silver blade flashed in the darkness.

“Yunyun’s weird actions are only reliable in such situations. After all, I don’t have any weapon, so it’s up to you in the critical moment, okay?”

“Weird!? What do you mean by weird!? Hey, am I doing something weird!?”

“Rather than weird— Only weird Yunyun would bring a dagger to school because she likes it. No matter how much you like the dagger, it is still ridiculous.”

“Ugh...! I, I can’t retort that... That’s true! But what is going on? I have a sense of unease since just now...!”

I put my index finger to my lips, signaling to the noisy Yunyun. I snuck quietly into the house that continued to be filled with “kada, kada” sounds.

There were no anguish cries of Komekko from the house.

The worst scenario flashed across my mind, but my sister was a great person so she must be alright— I tried to convince myself to calm myself down...!

—Upon going through the front door, I came face-to-face with the monster.

A reptilian monster with a bird’s beak was directly in front of us.

“.....Ah, ahhhh! Yunyunyunyunyun! Yunyunyun! Yunyun!”

“Wait. Don’t push me! And why did my name become so strange? Wait, wait!”

“Ahhhh!”

“It is intimidating us, just intimidating us, Yunyun. Please use your dagger to stab it!”

“Even if you ask me to kill the monster, I...!”

The monster raised its voice after seeing us arguing loudly.

Yunyun forcefully took a pose with her silver dagger, but there was

no strength in her. Her cheeks were shivering, as if she might cry at any moment.

The monster seemed to think Yunyun was easy to deal with, and extended its limbs to grab us—!

“Now!”

I pushed Yunyun hard. The monster’s belly was pierced by Yunyun’s dagger, and it cried out in agony.

“Gaahhh!”

“Hyaaaaa!”

Yunyun screeched along with the monster as she stabbed it.

I took the dagger from the screaming Yunyun, and went towards the wounded monster which was rolling on floor near the door. Holding the dagger in both hands, I stabbed the monster in its throat.

“Ugghhh! Megumin! Meg-Megumin— Ahhh!”

“You, you are so noisy, Yunyun! We are Crimson Magic Clan that even the demon king fears. How can you hesitate when driving out mon... sters...?”

..... ?

There was something strange about the monster which was stabbed by me.

Or rather...

“.....It vanished?”

“Wh-Why?”

After being stabbed in the throat, the monster struggled in agony for a while, and then vanished in a puff of black smoke.

Why did the corpse vanish?

At this moment, I noticed that the house was silent once more.

It looked like there was only one monster searching my house, the one that died and vanished.

But there should be a lot of monsters coming in the direction of my house.

And why did it search a poor household with barely any food?

No, the most important thing now is—!

“.....Yes, Komekko! Komekko, where are you!? It’s me, your sister!”

“Ko-Komekko? Komekko, where are you!”

Yunyun and I searched the house, but Komekko neither replied nor appeared.

A close examination revealed that there was no blood stain.

Which meant she probably escaped from the house.

Or was captured by monsters...

“Yunyun, she’s outside! My sister should be outside! I will go and find my sister. Yunyun, stay here just in case she returns home. Make a barricade out of the broken door and household items. Ah, lend me this dagger.”

I said and walked towards the door. Yunyun grabbed my collar.

“N-no! If Megumin, who has no motor nerves, goes, she would only be eaten! I will go too!”

Well...

“You are so arrogant just because you were lucky enough to win one match earlier. Fine, let’s go. But my condition is that when monsters appear, Yunyun will take full responsibility.”

“Eh!? This, this... uh...”

We argued as we exited the house...

—And walked into a monster tearing at the school bag I left outside.

“Kuro has—! I remembered you put Kuro inside the school bag!”

Yunyun cried in despair. The monster, which was tearing at the school bag, noticed us.

“Tha-That furball is a goner, let’s give up! It sacrificed its life for us, so I will erect a tombstone for him! No problem, that furball will always be with us. Yes, it will forever live in our hearts...!”

“It is still alive! Look carefully, that child is still alive! You are giving up too soon!?”

Yunyun said, pointing to the school bag, as she grabbed my collar as I turned to flee from the monster.

Truly, Kuro sneakily crawled out from the torn school bag.

However, the monster did not harm Kuro who was crawling out of the school bag. It merely watched the cat silently.

Furthermore, the monster noticed us a long time ago, but it seemed disinterested in us.

“In any case, this is a rare opportunity! That furball must have aroused the monster’s protective instinct! We should take the chance to escape and find my sister...!”

“Wait! I know you are worried about Komekko, but please save Kuro too!”

“What are you saying? If we take Kuro from the monster that is so obsessed with it, the monster will pursue us! I have a premonition!”

Hearing this, Yunyun showed a look like a child acting coyly at her parents, begging them to adopt a stray puppy.

.....Ahhh, how irritating!

“Prepare to run away! I will retrieve the furball my sister fed so dedicatedly.”

Of course, it was “fed dedicatedly” to become an emergency source of food— But it was better not to tell her this.

Yunyun's expression bloomed like a flower. I held the dagger and circled around to the monster's back...

—Simultaneously, the monster also acted.

It reached for Kuro with its claws and used both hands to carry it.

Kuro did not resist. It seemed really docile to the monster which was carrying it.

As the monster was about to spread its wings to fly into the sky...!

“My sister is full of expectations for it to grow. If that furball is taken, my sister will hate me! Taste my weapon toss skill!”

“Ahh!”

I exerted my strength to toss the dagger, which flew off in an unrelated direction.

“...Unbelievable. This monster is even protected by a wind magic barrier...”

“There's no barrier! No matter I see it, it was Megumin who threw the dagger over to a weird place!”

“Now is not that time for this trivial argument! Kuro...!”

“True! What Megumin said is true! But I keep having this uneasy feeling—!”

As we were arguing, the monster took Kuro and flew into the sky towards somewhere...

—Watching Kuro being taken away, I said in a strangely quiet voice.

“...That furball must be a messenger from Heaven. It merely returned to its original home. So, stop crying, gently send it on its way...!”

“Don't add on such a strange setting and let Kuro die! What should we do, Kuro was taken! The monster must be taking it to its lair to eat it! What should we do!”

Almost in tears, Yunyun recovered the dagger and said.

“Hm. Calm down first. Kuro did not struggle when taken by the monster, so it should be safe. That furball received my family’s Spartan style education, so it can sense danger.”

“Hey, how did you actually educate it!? Were you abusing it!?”

Yunyun grabbed my shoulders and shook me.

No matter what, Komekko was more important than Kuro.

“Leave Kuro for now. The important one is Komekko. My sister is very brave and experienced. I didn’t raise her to be the kind of naïve brat that will cry at any event and then get killed. She must be hiding somewhere now...”

“T-That’s right! Hey, Megumin, do you know where Komekko might be!?”

A place where Komekko might go...

I couldn’t possibly have a clue.

But I felt that something Komekko said before was very worrying.

What was it, what was it...

“I have no evidence, but I am a bit concerned about something. After all, when I was young, I was just like Komekko...”

I frequently snuck out of the house to play, provoking my parents to scold me.

—As I was about to say this... A certain memory flashed across my mind.

I remembered when I was young, I once played with the evil god’s seal as if it was a toy.

“.....Ah.”

“.....? What is it, Megumin?”

Recently, when I asked Komekko where was she playing, she

answered.

“I found a toy, so I kept playing! Sis wants to play too?”

.....This.

.....This, is this really...!

“Ahah... Ahahahah... Don-don-don-don’t tell me it...!”

“What!? Wha-What happened, Megumin? Why are you panicking...”

It all made sense. It finally all made sense.

My poor family has no toy.

But Komekko said she found a toy.

It was possible that my cute sister merely received a toy from a neighbor, but the most likely scenario would be...!

PART 2

—The tombstone of the evil god was erected outside the village.

Lit by magic lamps, the tombstone gave off a sinister feel in the night.

Monsters continued to circle in the sky above. We arrived at the tomb.

The monsters ignored us as we ran here. They seemed to be looking for something.

“Hey, Megumin, Komekko wouldn’t run to a place like this...”

I did not reply when Yunyun said so uneasily. We hid in the bushes to observe the situation at the tombstone.

“.....She’s here.”

“.....She’s really here.”

Komekko held the puzzle pieces and stood blankly before the

tombstone. I did not know what she was trying to do.

I recognized the thing Komekko was holding as the seal fragments.

Why was this kid holding such things in this place?

As I pondered this, I followed Komekko's gaze...

".....Great, Yunyun. That furball is fine too."

"Why are you so calm!? Isn't this situation really terrifying!?"

Komekko, who was holding the puzzle pieces, faced the monster, which was holding Kuro.

"Wha-Wha-What do we do now! And where are the adults in the village!?"

"Looking at the current situation, it is unlikely for new monsters to appear from the tomb. The adults must have confirmed this and dispersed to drive away the monsters inside the village."

Since earlier, the villagers had been firing colorful magic into the sky.

If the situation wasn't like this, I would be watching the "fireworks" from my house's window along with Komekko and Yunyun.

"Hm. Calm down. As you can see, there is only one enemy, who is concentrating on Komekko. It should be fine if we proceed carefully. After all, we already killed one."

"I, I see. You have thought this out well."

Yunyun started to calm down as she looked at me.

Then, Komekko put the puzzle pieces down on the floor, suddenly raising both arms towards the monster.

".....What is Komekko doing?"

"Probably intimidating the monster. It looks like she wants to take Kuro from the monster."

Faced with the advancing Komekko, the monster backed off.

Even Kuro, who was being carried by the monster, started shivering.

“It feels like the monster has been suppressed by Komekko. Although I want to watch how this develops... Let’s go, Yunyun. I’ll entrust you to be the bait.”

“O-Okay... Hey, wait! Why am I the bait!”

“Clumsy Yunyun couldn’t possibly kill it in one hit, right? So lend me that dagger... I won’t toss it this time. Quickly give it to me!”

“No, no! This time I will hit it, so Megumin be the bait...! Hey, ah!”

As we argued over the dagger, she suddenly looked up at the sky and exclaimed.

Looking closely, there were five monsters descending near Komekko.

“No-No problem, right!? Megumin must have thought of a plan, right!?”

“Of course, in such critical moments, surely a hidden power will be awakened, or someone will come to the rescue. Therefore, we just need to shiver and scream like helpless girls...”

“Megumin, what are you saying!? And where are you looking at? Your eyes have become swirly! Hey, are you unexpectedly bad at handling sudden crisis!?”

Komekko was oblivious to me, while I was losing my grip on reality. She started making intimidating noises at the surrounding monsters.

“Gah!”

“—Hey, Megumin. Will Komekko really be okay!? That kid is trying to fight so many monsters! And why is she not afraid, instead why are the monsters getting scared!”

My little sister might really be a great person.

Leaving aside Kuro who treated her as a natural nemesis, why were the monsters afraid of her?

It was as if they were infected by Kuro's fear.

“Eh, now is not the time to simply wait!I didn't want to do this.....”

I took out my trump card from my pocket.

Looking at it, Yunyun said.

“Adventurer's Card? ...Ah!? Megumin, you...!”

—Exactly. I had to choose the lesser of two evils.

If I had to choose between my sister's life and Explosion magic, then of course—!

“Stop right there!”

Komekko and the monsters looked at me.

I held my Adventurer's Card, jumping out of the bushes.

“My name is Megumin! Crimson Magic Clan's top genius who wields advanced magic! Leave my sister alone!”

“Ah, sis! They snatched away my meal!”

“Komekko!? What meal!? You mean Kuro!?”

Both of them just ruined my cool debut!

Yunyun held her dagger and emerged after me.

“...Hey, Megumin, you really want to learn advanced magic? But you love Explosion magic so much.....”

“A genius like me can easily regain the points by hunting a lot of monsters. No matter how long it takes— Even if it takes dozens of years, I will never give up on Explosion magic!”

.....I said that, but my heart still felt heavy.

Even though I needed to confront the monsters now.

The monsters changed their targets, slowly surrounding and closing

in on us.

One of them spread its wings, intending to attack us from the sky.

—My hand was shaking as it held on to my Adventurer's Card.

After all, it was my childhood dream. It wasn't so easy to give up on.

But there was no other way to save my sister.

.....No problem. I just had to work harder from now on.

I convinced myself and took my Adventurer's Card—!

“Your voice and body are shivering. You can't bear to do it, right?”

Yunyun put her dagger back at her waist.

She held her Adventurer's Card in her hands, just like I was.

“What are you—“

— *trying to do* ?

As I was about to finish my question...

“Lightning—!”

I was interrupted by Yunyun's incantation.

PART 3

I followed the star-like street lights, running as I held Komekko's hand.

“Sis, Yunyun is so powerful! The lightning went ‘dong’—!”

Maybe she was too excited, Komekko held onto my hand very strongly.

“Yes, very powerful. But Yunyun has surpassed me now! I thought she will be at a loss while standing to the side...!”

I complained to Komekko as I ran to find the adult villagers.

—Yunyun learned intermediate magic.

After learning intermediate magic, she would have to graduate.

So she could no longer enjoy the privilege of being an immature Crimson Magic Clansman — an easy way to obtain the rare Skill Up Potion.

If Yunyun decided to learn advanced magic, she must fight monsters to gain experience and level up.

Learning intermediate magic consumed 10 skill points.

To regain these skill points, she must increase the same amount of levels correspondingly.

Also, the higher your level, the more difficult it is to gain a level.

Low-level Yunyun should gain levels very fast.

But no matter how fast, it would still take at least one year to gain 10 levels.

For the next year, my rival would be seen as an incompetent Crimson Magic Clansman.

Even though she worked really hard as the chief's daughter and always achieved excellent results.

“Sis, are you crying?”

“I’m not crying! I’m just feeling vexed, causing my mana to flow from my eyes!”

Yunyun used lightning magic to attack the head of the monster holding on to Kuro, and said.

—I will save Kuro. You take Komekko and find the adult villagers—

Because I was indecisive about learning advanced magic, Yunyun had to graduate from being an apprentice wizard.

And that child, who disliked killing, could actually unleash magic without reservation like this.

Although normally awkward, she would come forth when someone needed protection.

My rival's posture was really dazzling—

“...? Sis, what is it? Too tired to run?”

Komekko was bewildered as she stared at me, who stopped moving.

My self-proclaimed rival was fighting monsters alone.

My self-proclaimed rival who never won me.

My self-proclaimed rival was a lonely person with no friend, and would pester me all the time.

—If I ran away now to achieve my dream, I would never be qualified to have a match with my self-proclaimed rival again.

“Komekko, do you like sister?”

“Like!”

Komekko smiled and answered.

“.....Even if sister cannot use the most powerful magic, cannot become the most powerful wizard?”

“I will do it in sister's place, so no problem!”

Komekko continued to smile and answer.

At her young age, she was already aiming to become the most powerful. Truly, she would become a great person.

“.....Komekko, I am going to save Yunyun, so you.....”

As I was saying, I looked at the sky, searching for the nearest battle location.

There were a few flashes of light shooting from the ground up nearby.

I squatted down to Komekko's eye level and said.

“You run to where that light was. The adult villagers should be there. The flying monsters seem to be searching for something, so they won’t be hostile to you. For someone who can safely arrive at the tomb in the midst of this confusion, you would be fine. Avoid street lamps and similar things so you would not stand out, and stealthily —“

“Don’t want! I want to be with sis!”

“.....Listen properly, I’m going into battle, but no matter how strong or cool I am, there is a chance of losing. So—“

As I attempted to persuade her, my sister clenched her fists and said roughly.

“I want to fight too! I will take back my stolen meal!”

She said these worrying, yet reliable words.

—I turned back on the road and repeatedly instructed my sister.

“Listen properly! You must not leave my side!”

“I understand!”

“Do not charge the monster which had taken Kuro! I will help you recover Kuro! You understand?”

“Okay! I will try to not charge at it!”

“Not try, you absolutely must not!”

“I understand!”

Was this really okay? Honestly, I felt uneasy...

But driving away the persistent Komekko might be even more dangerous.

.....I made my decision.

I will not give up on Explosion magic. Even if I had to spend a few years or a few decades, I would absolutely learn it.

This was just a slight detour.

Right, just a slight—

PART 4

“Blade of Wind!”

Yunyun shouted and slashed down her hand, creating a blast of wind.

The wind became a blade and cut down one of the monsters in the sky.

Normally, intermediate magic was unable to deal so much damage.

This must be because of Yunyun’s naturally strong magic power. She was truly the one whose power was second to me.

As we returned to the scene, we watched Yunyun fought on desperately.

“Sis, aren’t you going?”

“Wait, Komekko. Your clever sister suddenly realizes something. There is no need for advanced magic. It is enough for us to just survive this encounter.”

I said as I watched the battle.

.....I was not backing out from my decision.

If intermediate magic was enough to fight off these monsters like Yunyun was currently doing, why waste points to learn advanced magic?

Yunyun was already gaining the upper hand.

Since the monsters did not leave their corpses behind, it was impossible to determine how many she had killed. But when I was running away, there should be six of them.

Now there was only one left.

Yunyun stood in front, leaving Kuro protectively by her feet.

“.....But this is terrible. Yunyun is going to defeat all the monsters.”

“? Isn't it good if Yunyun defeated them all?”

“Of course not. If so, my decision to return would be...”

At this moment.

My wish was granted. Seven monsters descended from the night sky.

Good, I would coolly debut and save her, repaying everything she was due!

“My name—“

“My name is Komekko! Watching the house is my job. I'm the Crimson Magic Clan's Number One Femme Fatale little sister!”

Komekko interrupted me and presented herself first.

“Komekko! You... Why do you keep interrupting my glorious debut!”

“I won't apologize!”

“Ko-Komekko!”

“Hey! Why are you two still here!? I told you to run away!?”

Yunyun fixed her gaze on the oncoming monsters, as she shouted at us.

I said to her.

“You think I will owe my self-proclaimed rival a debt of honor and run away by myself?!”

“It's about time you drop this 'self-proclaimed' prefix! After all, I am now a true wizard after learning magic! I'm different from the fake wizard Megumin!”

“F-Fake wizard!? Ho-How dare you, you intermediate magician!”

“Don't call me an 'intermediate magician' like I'm a substandard Crimson Magic Clansman!”

While we were arguing, one of the monsters who descended earlier suddenly pounced at Yunyun.

Even though she was arguing with me, Yunyun was still watching the enemy's movements. She picked Kuro up, and quickly rolled out of the way to avoid the attack.

Then, she drew her dagger with her other hand and threw it at the monster.

Maybe it was just luck, but Yunyun's dagger hit the monster's throat.

"Phew—!"

The wounded monster let out a sound like a lute, and collapsed while holding its own throat. It then vanished in a puff of black smoke.

Seeing this, the remaining monsters rushed at Yunyun!

"Looks like you are in danger! Intermediate magician Yunyun! Now is time for the advanced magician Megumin to take care of these trash in one go!"

"Eh!? Megumin, what are you saying all of a sudden!? Why did you think I learned intermediate magic...!"

Yunyun got up quickly and raised one hand to the sky.

"From now on, I will not say 'self-proclaimed' anymore. I will treat you as an official rival! And I don't intend to owe my rival a debt of honor! What were you thinking? You wanted to graduate first and widen our distance? You said you wanted to graduate with me together, now we can...!"

"Fire Ball!!"

"Eh!? Wait...!!"

Yunyun did not listen to my speech to the end. She unleashed a fire ball at the oncoming enemies.

This magic must have been infused with all her mana.

The monsters were hit directly by the fire ball, creating such a huge

explosion that nobody would believe it was an intermediate magic. A loud boom echoed through the sky.

Seven monsters fell from the sky, instantly reducing to ashes.

At the same time, after confirming all the enemies were defeated, Yunyun knelt down on the floor, possibly due to mana exhaustion.

I hurried over to her side.

“This way... Megumin does not need to learn advanced magic...!”

She said with an expression that was flaunting her victory.

“.....Why must it be you. And didn't Yunyun object to me learning Explosion magic? Why did you change your mind!”

I said as I laid her head down on my shoulder.

“No-not changed my mind... Even now, I object to you learning Explosion magic, but I feel it will be a pity to give up your dream for this reason... An-and! It took so much effort to make you owe me one. I won't let you repay me so easily! There was never much opportunity to make you owe me a favour!”

“Then since you are unable to move due to mana exhaustion, if I send you home, it would cancel my debt of honor, right?”

“Eh!?”

As I decided to forcefully carry Yunyun home, Komekko rushed forward and carried Kuro.

I really hoped that the reason she fixed her gaze on Kuro and had her eyes glowing bright red was because she was happy to see Kuro unharmed.

“Hey, Megumin! I learned intermediate magic to help you, yet you said merely carrying me home would cancel the debt. This is too much!”

“You are noisy. You cannot move due to mana exhaustion. If I abandon you here, you would be eaten by the next wave of monsters, right? In other words, I'm your savior... See, this is similar

to you saving me earlier.”

“This is sophistry! I risked my life to fight all these monsters, yet Megumin.....”

Yunyun was grabbing me tightly. She suddenly stopped her protests.

I followed her gaze and was dumbstruck as well.

“Sis, so many of those winged things are coming! Hey, are they edible? Can I eat them?”

We watched the swarm of monsters that could darken the sky, as Komekko said and jumped for joy.

PART 5

It seemed I was running around everywhere today.

“Meg-Megumin, it is painful! My tip of my shoes are about to be grinded off!”

Yunyun tearfully complained on my back.

“Don’t be so willful! Since I’m short, I cannot help it! Who asked you to grow so tall! If it hurts that much, then pulled it up yourself.”

“Then I will carry Yunyun’s feet!”

We fled along the dark road as I took Komekko and carried the exhausted Yunyun on my back.

“Pain! Pain! Komekko, wait! If you lift my legs like this, my posture will be like a fried shrimp...!”

“This is such a desperate situation, what the hell are both of you doing! Don’t move about on my back! Or I will dump you here and abandon you!”

As I grumbled, many of the monsters that were covering the sky passed over us.

.....Why have so many monsters congregated here?

As if to answer me, magic flashed towards the sky one after another. Without us noticing, the amount of magic we were seeing had increased.

It seemed we had shortened the distance with the magic-using villagers.

In other words, these monsters were not congregating, but were being driven here.

“It seems most of the monsters are using this place to regroup.”

“In other words, the evil god’s minions are gathering at the evil god’s tombstone!? Why are they doing this... Because there are too many monsters, so they want to drive them here and seal them all at once?”

.....So that was it. The adults were probably intending to seal them all in one go, or simply use super powerful magic to destroy them.

If so, we must quickly leave this place.

Although the situation was urgent...

“.....Yunyun, now is a good time for that famous phrase. You can loudly say classical quotes like ‘Just leave me behind. You go ahead first!’”

“No, no, no, don’t abandon me! Megumin said earlier that carrying me home would repay the debt of honor!”

Why did I say such unnecessary words...!

Amidst the monsters’ disgusting roars, I gave my all to drag Yunyun and escape.

Even if I learned advanced magic, it would be impossible to deal with this many monsters.

I silently prayed that we would not be seen and hid in the shadows by the street lamp.

At this time.

“Meow!”

Kuro cried while being held in Komekko’s hands.

—The cry was so soft, yet the monsters circling in the sky flew over here.

The monsters’ behavior finally granted me an epiphany!

“Komekko! Throw that furball into the sky!”

“What are you saying!? Megumin, what are you saying!?”

“It took so much effort to snatch back my meal, I can’t just throw it away!”

“Komekko, you too! What are you saying!?”

.....How did things come to this.

Why did I notice this only at this time.

The reason the monsters attacked my house was probably Kuro.

The time when we were having field training as well.

That monster ignored other students and charged at me who was carrying Kuro.

Recently, Komekko had been running out to play with the evil god’s seal fragments.

Komekko suddenly brought back this furball one day.

At the same time, the village started having eye witness reports of the evil god’s minions.

There was only one conclusion that all these clues pointed to—!

“Ahah, what a headache! My head! If I think any more, my brain’s self-defense mechanism will be activated!”

“Hey, Megumin, what nonsense are you spouting!? Stop avoiding reality, okay!”

Hearing Yunyun's words, I recovered my wits and reevaluated the situation.

It looked like all the flying monsters were fixing their gazes on us.

I wanted to abandon Kuro and run, but...

"Sis, this is a good opportunity! Let's catch one home!"

With the aura of a great person, Komekko carried the shivering Kuro and said with a grin.

I looked my sister in her sparkling eyes and put Yunyun down from my back. I gazed at the sky and took out my Adventurer's Card.

"Meg-Megumin?"

Yunyun asked uneasily from the ground.

Not far from here, magic continued to blast into the sky.

I must learn advanced magic to buy some time.

If I unleashed advanced magic here, the adult villagers would rush over immediately.

"Sis, what's wrong? Your eyes are much redder than usual?"

Of course, they would be red.

After all, my emotions were surging.

"Yunyun, run away with Komekko."

I gazed at the sky and accumulated all the mana in my body.

Even if I never used magic, I could still control the flow of mana in my body due to the nature of Crimson Magic Clan.

The evil god's minions in the sky did not descend, probably thinking we were using Kuro as a hostage.

But I felt they would not just keep waiting. After all, they were currently at trigger point. Given an opening, they would attack all at once.

—For example, I unleashed a magic— This would definitely create an opening.

No problem. I made my decision.

“Meg-Megumin. I feel they are observing our situation. Let’s just wait for the adults to arrive...!”

I would not regret it. I would simply work harder in future.

“Sis, your eyes...!”

Still carrying Kuro, Komekko looked at me worriedly.

I patted her head gently and told her I was fine.

Then, I made my final stand and took out my Adventurer’s Card to learn advanced magic.

—I looked at my card and froze.

At the time, I laughed aloud uncontrollably.

“Wh-What is it!? Megumin, have you finally gone crazy!?”

“Sis is broken!”

“Ho-How rude! What are both of you saying!”

Even as I rebuked them, my eyes did not leave my Adventurer’s Card.

—I had enough skill points.

I had enough skill points to learn Explosion magic.

PART 6

Even though I knew it was a foolish move, I still insisted on learning this magic.

“Sis is making crackling sounds!”

“Megumin, Megumin!? What is it, what is it!? What advanced magic

are you using!? When the villagers used their magic, there was never such a phenomenon! Hey, what is this magic!?”

Since I was young, I memorized the incantation and practiced chanting this magic daily.

The surrounding atmosphere changed along with my gathered mana and the incantation I was chanting.

With me at the center, the surrounding atmosphere was filled with static electricity and became hazy.

After all, this wasn't just my first time using magic. It was also my first time using Explosion magic, known for its highest difficulty.

I could not completely control the power, so some of it seeped into the surrounding and interfered with the environment.

—As I chanted the incantation for Explosion magic, I remembered many things.

Things that happened after I was just one point short of learning Explosion magic.

After I fought Yunyun in the park, I strangled a wandering Onion Duck.

At that time, my level had increased, and my skill points were sufficient.

As if sensing the uneasy mood, the evil god's minions cried out in disarray.

I could feel my mana being consumed for every line of incantation I chanted.

Even though I was confident in my amount of mana, I still sweated uneasily.

Since Explosion magic consumed a vast amount of mana, if the caster did not have enough mana, the magic could not be used even if it was learned.

The sentences from the textbook flashed across my mind, but as a

Crimson Magic Clansman, it was impossible I could not use this magic. I shook the troubling thoughts out of my head and continued the incantation.

Finally, the magic incantation was completed—

There was a small ball of light in my hand.

.....It was done.

To create this small light, I had been working hard since I was a kid. I finally succeeded.

I still did not have a magic staff to boost the magic power.

To unleash Explosion magic like this, the power would probably be about half of what it should be.

But, even so.

“Yunyun, Komekko. Get down.”

I was still confident that I could wipe these monsters out in one strike.

Yunyun dragged her weakened body next to Komekko and hugged her as she lay down on the floor.

It looked like she understood what I was about to do.

The glowing light in hand was hot like a fire. The pressure from the compressed power was comforting.

No problem. I would surely control this properly.

I silently encouraged myself, gazing at the sky.

The Explosion magic I always wanted to learn.

The Explosion magic of my dreams.

The Explosion magic that I staked everything on.

Neither dragon nor demon, neither god or demon king, would survive a direct hit. This was mankind's ultimate move.

The scene from my childhood memory was still as clear as yesterday. This time, I would personally—

“My name is Megumin! Crimson Magic Clan’s top genius who wields Explosion magic! I have— I have finally attained the magic of my dreams! I, I will never forget this day! ...Eat this!!”

I opened both my eyes and lifted the ball of light in my hand into the sky, then shouted.

“Explosion——!!”

The light from my hand shot towards the center of the monster swarm.

The light disappeared as if swallowed by a monster.

One second later, a flashy and glorious firework bloomed in the night sky—!!



“Ahhh! Gyaaaaa!!”

“——!!”

“Hahahaha! This is it. This is what I wanted to see! What a glorious

explosion! What destructive power! What an uninhibited feeling!”

While hugging Komekko, Yunyun cried out in despair. I ignored the violent winds and the explosive roar, and laughed aloud.

The shockwave broke the trees beneath the explosion. I was pushed onto the floor.

The monsters in the sky were devastated by the magically powered explosive winds and routed by the irresistible, overwhelming violence. All of them had vanished.

I lay on the floor, gazing at the sky.

I could not move due to mana exhaustion, so I could only watch the smoke cleared away in the aftermath.

When the smoke finally cleared, the vast quantity of monsters had all vanished.

“.....Wha-What is this... This is Explosion magic...? This is beyond the description of ‘powerful’ or ‘strong’... Even without the control and boost effect of a magic staff, it is this powerful. No wonder it is called the most powerful magic... I can somewhat, somewhat understand why Megumin is so obsessed with Explosion magic.”

After witnessing the destructiveness of Explosion magic, Yunyun sighed.

I did not intend to respond, merely lay there quietly.

A single use exhausted the entire mana reserve, and even consumed physical stamina.

After using this magic, the caster would be completely helpless.

This meant that to become an adventurer, I must have companions who could defend me when I was completely exhausted.

I always thought I would be fine by myself.

But there were things I could not do alone.

I must remember today’s experience. I must definitely treasure my

companions.

I heard voices from afar. The adult villagers sounded very anxious. I imagined the appearances of my future companions whom I have never met.....

“Ah!! Sis blew away all the bird meat!!”

PART 7

—A few days later.

After the adults who saw the Explosion magic arrived, the situation became very chaotic.

After all, the chief’s daughter and me were lying on the floor, while Komekko was carrying Kuro and standing nearby.

I was carried home unconscious. The next day, Yunyun and I reported what happened to the homeroom teacher.

As for the other adults, I told them that after reaching home, I found the door broken, Komekko missing, and brought Yunyun along to find Komekko.

As a result, there was a new question circulating among the villagers.

“...Hey, Megumin, what do we do now?”

“.....”

Yunyun asked without any expression. I had no answer.

The homeroom teacher said the school would have a graduation ceremony for us on the weekend. We just needed to go to school then.

We had nothing to do these few days, spending time in the nearby park.

“.....Hey, Megumin.”

Since she called me, I turned to look at her.

She turned slowly and stared at me at a close distance—

“.....MeguminWhat are we going to do!”

I shut my eyes, cupped my ears, and squatted on the floor.

“Now is not the time to pretend you didn’t hear anything! What are we going to do! Mr. Buzucoily said the seal on the Nameless Goddess of Vengeance was also broken! The seal location was exactly when Megumin used magic on! The released goddess is currently missing! What to do!? Hey, what are we going to do!”

Yunyun forcefully shook my shoulders as I continued to pretend I didn’t hear anything.

Although I wanted to just avoid the issue like this, I heard a line that must be corrected.

“Yunyun, wait. The way you said it will easily give other people the mistaken impression that ‘I’m the one who broke the seal’.”

“That isn’t a mistake, right!? Mr. Buzucoily said many dangerous things were sealed in that place! Unleashing the powerful Explosion magic in the sky above that place will cause the seals to break!”

I said to Yunyun, who would not stop pestering me.

“But the adult villagers have a different explanation. The released evil god fought the awakened goddess. In the end, the goddess won and wiped out the evil god’s minions in one big explosion. Thereafter, she flew somewhere...”

“This is completely wrong! It was the fault of Megumin’s magic!”

None of the villagers thought it was Komekko who broke the evil god’s seal.

And they did not know I learned Explosion magic.

Only the homeroom teacher knew what we learned.

If the adult villagers knew I learned Explosion magic and Yunyun

learned intermediate magic, they would be very disappointed.

The homeroom teacher understood this, so it was kept a secret from the villagers.

It seemed the homeroom teacher, whom I always thought was hopeless, still cared about the students.

And besides—

“Yunyun, today can’t I...”

“No! Why do you need to ask!? The disturbance has finally ceased, are you trying to create chaos again!? You have not used Explosion magic these few days, so you can endure it, right!? ...Ev-Even if you make such a sad face, it is still impossible! And I’m thinking of your welfare!”

Yunyun said that even though she was wavering a little.

It was a few days ago when I tasted the feel of Explosion magic.

Thereafter, Yunyun banned me from using Explosion magic.

The reason being releasing the magic nearby would cause another disturbance in the village, after the homeroom teacher managed to cover it up.

Yes, I understood the reason.

Although I understood...

“Yunyun, you should know how much I love Explosion magic, right?”

“Yes, I do. I understand that Megumin’s love for Explosion magic is, in other people’s eyes, an obsessive mania.”

If she knew this much, then it should be easy.

“Listen, Yunyun. To explain how much I love Explosion magic— If I had to choose between ‘Use Explosion magic and eat one passable meal per day’ and ‘Eat three meals plus dessert without Explosion magic per day’, I would gladly choose to eat one passable meal and use Explosion magic. After which, I would eat the remaining two

meals plus dessert. I love Explosion magic this much.”

“Eh... Glutton Megumin can actually say...? Eh, uh!? Hey, can you repeat what you just said? I feel that you just said something very strange!”

Yunyun hurriedly interrogated me, but actually I understood using Explosion magic would create a lot of trouble.

I scratched the head of the furball at my feet.

“Hm. I will endure it for some time. Once I cannot endure it anymore, I will travel and use Explosion to devastate the world beyond the village.”

“You, you better not do that! Not even as a joke!”

I stood up and decided to change the topic.

“It is good that nobody was injured in the incident. Although the understanding of the villagers is different from the truth, it’s fine if they can accept it.”

I picked up the furball at my feet.

Yunyun looked at Kuro in my arms and asked with mixed feelings.

“.....Hey, Megumin. What is Kuro exactly? Why does Kuro attract all those monsters? Is it related to the evil god? And how was the evil god’s seal broken? Is it really like the villagers said? That a passing tourist pulled a practical joke...?”

Yunyun did not get to the core of the issue.

After all, nobody would think that the seal was broken by a child out of curiosity.

If I had not done the same thing when I was young, I would never suspect Komekko.

After interrogating her thoroughly at home, I found out it was indeed Komekko who broke the seal.

I wanted to scold her, but I could do it when she innocently took out

the seal pieces and asked me if I wanted to play.

The only damage to my house was the front door. It wasn't serious, so I just kept quiet.

—The question was, what to do with this fellow.

“This furball is so shameless. A kitten should act cuter.”

Kuro, who was sought out and carefully carried by the evil god's minions.

Its true form was probably...

“Hey, Megumin. Are you going to keep it at home? Uh, uh... Komekko's look is very...”

Yunyun stopped speaking half-way.

Yes, of course I understood what she wanted to say.

“What to do. Seriously, if I leave it at home, Komekko may eventually eat it. But at this moment, neither giving it to someone else nor letting it go is a good idea...”

I carried Kuro with both hands and lifted it to my eye level. It did not resist.

Yunyun looked at Kuro and thought of a plan.

“Right! Why not officially establish a familiar contract? If it is sister's beloved familiar, Komekko probably won't...”

She deflated as she spoke.

Of course, I understood what she meant.

For my little sister lived by her instinct, such reasoning did not apply.

But, familiar...

“...A wizard who controls the evil god... It doesn't sound bad.”

“? Megumin, what did you just say?”

It looked like Yunyun did not hear what I just mumbled to myself.

“I said letting it be my familiar does not sound bad.”

I haphazardly glossed it over.

And smiled at this furball with a grand background.

Yunyun relaxed and heaved a sigh of relief. Suddenly, I thought of something.

“Yes, if it is to be my familiar, this temporary name is no good.”

“Eh!? Can’t you use Kuro as the official name!?”

“No, for it to have this tasteless name is just too sad.”

“Tasteless name!?”

I ignored Yunyun who was in shock. I thought hard about its name.

At this time, Kuro suddenly turned its body.

As if it was saying, “Kuro is fine.”

“Look, Kuro seems to like his current name. And this kid is still a kitten, changing its name randomly would confuse it.”

Yunyun insisted that the name she gave was better. But I already thought of a good name.

“I decided!”

I said confidently. Conversely, Yunyun looked uneasy.

“Hey, Megumin. Kuro is a female cat, okay? Consider this fact and give it a cute name...”

I interrupted her.

I looked at my familiar before me and announced to it.

“—Your name is Chomsuke. That’s right, Chomsuke.”

The familiar that usually swaggered about, and possibly had a very terrifying true form—

Shivered like never before.

INTERLUDE: LAST SCENE

—Greater Demon And Demoniac Girl—

“Oh, Komekko.”

“Oh, Hoost.”

I stood before the evil god’s tombstone. At this moment, Hoost flew over with something.

“We haven’t met in a while... Yes, what is the matter? It seems the area around the tomb is really messy. There is even a region where the trees were flattened. What happened here?”

“I heard the evil god revived, which then woke up the nameless goddess. They fought and the evil god was destroyed.”

Hoost dropped whatever it was holding onto the floor.

It was a cage containing a chicken and a few small chicks.

“You, You must be joking!!”

“That is what the adults said.”

Hearing this, Hoost lowered its head dejectedly.

But I was more concerned about the clucking chicken in the cage.

“Why would Lady Wolbach’s seal be... What is this. In just the time I was away... Eh? But this is very strange. If Lady Wolbach’s other half was destroyed, I won’t be able to remain in this world...”

I sat by the cage, observed its interior. Hoost suddenly shouted.

“That’s right! Lady Wolbach’s other half must have survived! It must be hiding somewhere. I must find it quickly and protect it...!”

Hoost looked over here.

“...Uh, that. That’s how it is. I must go. I probably won’t ever see

you again... I don't need this offering anymore. You can have it."

"I will eat the mother hen. Chomsuke can eat the little chick."

"Don't eat it! Wait, this is not good for the kid's moral and emotional education. I better bring it along. By the way, what the heck is Chomsuke?"

"A black magical beast about this big. Want to see?"

"Who cares? It's probably just a cat, right? At least give it a proper name... Seriously, what's wrong with these people from Crimson Magic Clan..."

Hoost spread the wings on its back.

".....Are you leaving?"

"Ah? Didn't you hear what I said? I need to find Lady Wolbach... What, don't look so sad. This can't be helped, and uh, you belong to the Crimson Magic Clan, right?"

I nodded.

"I have a strong feeling that you will become a great wizard. If my contract with Lady Wolbach ended... At that time, if you can summon me, I will establish a familiar contract with you."

"Really!?"

"You would have to summon me first! Hm. But the chance of successfully summoning a greater demon like me is very low. You might not be able to summon..."

Hoost was hovering in the air with its wings. It tilted its head and hesitated, then dropped back on the ground. It squatted down to my eye level.

"That is how it usually is... But I feel you have the potential to become a demonologist. Who knows, you might actually be able to summon me."

"I will work hard at it!"

Hoost said, "Still not possible, right?" to dampen my enthusiasm, then he roughly ruffled my hair.

"Then, good bye, Komekko! You must do your best to become a great wizard! My name is Hoost! The greater demon who attends to the Evil God Lady Wolbach, Hoost!"

"My name is Komekko! Watching the house is my job. I'm Crimson Magic Clan's Number One Femme Fatale little sister! Also the one who will ultimately control Hoost!"

I flipped my cloak and made a pose at Hoost.

Hoost laughed loudly, spread its wings, and flew away from the village.

I watched my first friend, who frequently grumbled yet always brought me food, flew away.

I waved my hand until his silhouette vanished beyond the horizon.

Epilogue



At the shopkeeper's urging, I sat on the chair in the dark shop.

This shop is the house of divination owned by the diviner, Socketto.

Just as I thought everything was settled, Socketto suddenly called me over.

".....You really encountered quite a few incidents, Megumin."

Socketto smiled at me, who didn't even know what I was doing here.

"A few incidents" should be referring to me being chased by the evil god's minions, right?

".....Better buy your sister a proper toy in the future."

"!?"

Seeing my surprised expression, Socketto laughed heartily.

"Don't worry, I won't tell anyone. Diviners are usually very tight-lipped, okay? I did not call you here to talk about this."

She raised her hand to the crystal ball. I sighed heavily.

"Then, why did you call me here? Ah, is it about Buzucoily? Did that guy did something stupid again? Even if I know that NEET somewhat, please don't take it out on me."

"No. He sometimes walks around my shop, but it's not that troubling."

Socketto beckoned to me with her hand, wanting me to come closer.

"Today... I want to divine your future for you."

Socketto smiled.

"Divine? Divine what? I'm not interested in love topic."

"Ah, that's regrettable. But that isn't it. I just want to see what you would accomplish in the future. Based on my intuition as a diviner, you will do an extraordinary deed."

“Out of curiosity? Well, fine. But if you see anything unfortunate in the future, please don’t tell me.”

“Hehe, future can be changed. Helping you to avoid future misfortune is part of my job.”

Soketto happily infused the crystal ball with her mana.

“.....Hm. Firstly, you intend to leave the village, heading for a city named Axel. So that’s how it is. You will encounter all kinds of trouble there, and finally meet some good companions. These people are really excellent... excel... lent...? Uh, this, these people, personality-wise are excellent... Ah, eh...? This youth... ugh...”

“What!? Continue talking, I’m very concerned! What’s with my companions? They are excellent, respectable, and gentle, right?”

Soketto silently looked away.

“To give suggestions on avoiding future misfortune is your job, right!? Spit it out!”

I grabbed Soketto’s shoulders and shook her. Suddenly, Soketto’s expression changed.

“.....This, heh. Truly, Megumin is very fortunate to meet such great companions.”

“What is it!? You said the future can be changed, right? Now I must reconsider whether to go to Axel or not...!”

Soketto smiled bitterly and said.

“It won’t be good if this future is changed. Uh, I won’t tell you for now.”

“Please tell me! I am really very concerned!”

Soketto ignored my question and simply smiled happily.

“.....All of you will complete a great task. After that, you will return to the Home of the Crimson Magic due to certain disaster, which will probably be related to you and your companions.”

“This divination seems overly abstract... I heard Socketto’s divination is very specific and accurate.”

Socketto smiled bitterly and shrugged.

“The disaster in Home of the Crimson Magic should involve me as well. A diviner can never divine things related to herself. If an event is related to me, the crystal won’t show anything.”

She touched the crystal ball’s surface lightly.

If one can predict one’s own future, then a diviner can do whatever she pleases and changes the future accordingly. But looks like reality wasn’t so simple.

A disaster related to Socketto...

The disturbance this time, or the various dangerous things sealed in the seal— There were simply too many potential hazards and not enough clue.

“Could it be an invasion of the demon king’s army? Yes, Buzucoily even assembled the NEETs to form a strange team.”

She should be speaking of that so-called Anti-Demon King Army Guerilla Unit.

.....Eh?

When Socketto attempted to divine Buzucoily’s future lover, the crystal ball did not show anything.

If it was related to Socketto herself, the crystal ball would be like this...?

“Buzucoily doesn’t seem like a bad guy. If he finds a job, it would be good. Then change his weird habits of stalking people. His fateful mate should appear... Megumin, what’s wrong? Why are you smiling so suddenly?”

“No, nothing. I just felt it was too much of a mismatch.”

Mismatch? —After hearing my words, Socketto tilted her head in bewilderment.

“In any case, I can tell you this. Please look forward to your life in Axel... Listen, even if you are subjected to some sexual harassment, don't take it too hard.”

“I will be sexually harassed by whom!? Is it my companions who sexually harass me!? Hey, can this really be considered excellent companions!?”

—After I left the divination shop, Chomsuke hooked its claws on my shoulder, swinging back and forth.

Although the claws brought a bit of pain, it could still be endured.

Before I even started my travels, I suddenly received this uneasy news.

Might as well stay in the village as a NEET...

“Well, firstly I must stay in the village to prepare the money for travel. I can think about this later.”

I tried my best to convince myself and carried Chomsuke off my shoulder.

If I encountered some shameful companions, I could just drag them along. That should do it.

—My goals were twofold.

Firstly, let that big sister witness my Explosion magic.

And the other—

This world was full of monsters, criminals, and even demons.

I wanted to prove to the powers that be.

Prove that I, who learned Explosion magic, am the strongest.

Regardless of whether the opponent was the evil god or demon king
—

For some reasons, Chomsuke shivered in my arms.

I held Chomsuke upright, and let my crimson eyes flared.

Yes, upon the powers that be, I would cast down my Explosion—!

AMAZON SPECIAL

KOMEKKO'S SUCKER

What is going on?

“Big brother, I want to eat Snow Lizard Burger next!”

“No problem. Big brother is really strong. Snow Lizards or Fire lizards are nothing!”

As I was returning home after school, I saw Buzucoily trying to seduce Komekko with food. I was troubled as to whether I should complain to the adults in the village.

But, to my growing sister, this NEET is a rare sucker, so I could just pretend I didn't see anything...

“After I grow up, I want to be big brother's bride!”

“You bastard, how dare you seduce my little sister!”

“Hey, wait, wait, Megumin! Why are you suddenly hitting me!”

—After hearing in-depth explanations, I realized the hungry Komekko was running around, and Buzucoily was simply protecting her.

If she was allowed to run off, she would run into the dangerous forest near the village to find food.

“Listen, Komekko. There are dangerous monsters in the forest outside the village, so you must not go there alone, okay?”

Hearing what I said, Komekko replied.

“Can I go with the powerful Buzucoily?”

“No, this NEET may have battle strength, but being with him would have a different kind of danger for Komekko.”

“What are you trying to say? My taste is not that special!”

Komekko looked at us arguing.

“Between Sis and Buzucoily, who is stronger?”

“.....” X2

After a moment of silence, we naturally pointed to ourselves.

“Of course, it would be me, the village’s top genius...”

“Of course, it would be me, who spend a lot of time hunting monsters daily...”

We started to confront each other before Komekko.

“.....When we were young, I pushed you into the pond, making you cry. You should still remember, right?”

“.....That was many years ago. Now I have this move! Light of Refraction!”

“Th-, This guy actually used magic to argue with a girl younger than himself!”

While I was complaining about how petty Buzucoily was to use invisibility magic, his boastful voice came from somewhere.

“Megumin, just admit defeat! Compared to when I was young, I am different now and can be considered as an opponent of the demon king’s army...”

“—Oh, isn’t this Megumin and Komekko?”

The one who interrupted Buzucoily was the owner of the village’s best shoe shop, Buzucoily’s father.

“I asked the fellow to watch the shop, yet he ran off somewhere. Have you seen the fool?”

Komekko and I pointed to an empty spot.

“Should be around there.” X2

At that time, there was a sound of something running away hurriedly.

Buzucoily’s father began casting magic in that direction—!

Credits

STAFF

AUTHOR / NATSUME AKATSUKI

当作品はスニーカー文庫公式サイトにて連載されていた

「このすば」スピンオフです。

これを読まないで本編が分からなくなる

訳ではありませんが、読んでおくと本編で

ニヨニヨできる仕様となっております。

例えば、実はあのキャラが……!

……ページが足りない? ……この本の制作に

携わってくれた皆様、そして、読者様に深く感謝を!

ILLUSTRATION / KURONE MISHIMA

このお話読んでキマシタワーを何回したことやら。

次回もあなたの日常に爆焰を!

ARTICLE CONTRIBUTED BY

ARUE

装丁

百足屋ユウコ (ムシカゴグラフィクス)

ナカムラナナフシ (ムシカゴグラフィクス)

編集

角川スニーカー文庫編集部

CAST

MEGUMIN

YUNYUN

KOMEKKO

CHOMUSUKE

ARUE

KAIKAI

SAKIBERI

DODONKO

NERIMAKI

FLINIFURA

PUCCHIN

BUZUCOILY

SOKETTO

SPECIAL THANKS

HOOST

MITSURUGI KYOUIYA

EVERYONE FROM THE HOME
OF THE CRIMSON MAGIC

『GIFTING THE WONDERFUL WORLD WITH EXPLOSIONS! MEGUMIN'S TURN』

©2014 Natsume Akatsuki, Kurone Mishima

—完—



| | |
|--------|-------------------------|
| Author | (暁なつめ) Akatsuki Natsume |
|--------|-------------------------|

| | |
|-------------|------------------------|
| Illustrator | (三嶋くろね) Mishima Kurone |
|-------------|------------------------|

| | |
|-----------|-------------------------------|
| Publisher | <u>(角川書店) Kadokawa Shoten</u> |
|-----------|-------------------------------|

| | |
|------------|----------------------------|
| Translator | Barry Huang Sine Nomine |
|------------|----------------------------|

| | |
|--------|---|
| Editor | Darkdhaos Skythewood TaintedDreams Vysne |
|--------|---|

| | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| Book designer | <u>Armaell & Nephery</u> |
|---------------|------------------------------|



